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A Case Study of Designing, Teaching, and Learning Racial Literacy in an Urban Seventh Grade Reading and Writing Classroom

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A Case Study of Designing, Teaching, and Learning Racial Literacy in an Urban Seventh Grade Reading and Writing Classroom

by

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Dedication

This is dedicated to my exceptionally talented mother Anne Marie Adonyi (1953 – 2011); thankful your light shines on in so many of us and may your memory be blessed forever.

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Abstract

A Case Study of Designing, Teaching, and Learning Racial Literacy in an Urban Seventh Grade Reading and Writing Classroom

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In the current educational environment of high stakes testing and curricular control (Au, 2007), it is necessary for literacy teachers to be *creatively compliant and selectively defiant* (Hoffman, 2011) as it suits the learning needs of their students. The purpose of this study was to explore how to co-design and implement antiracist curriculum with one seventh-grade reading and writing teacher in his classroom (Dei, 2006; Troyna & Carrington, 2011; Wagner, 2005), as I aimed to draw upon and develop the racial literacy of the teacher and the students (Epstein & Gist, 2015; Ohito, 2017; Rogers & Mosley, 2006; Skerrett, 2011; Twine, 2004; Twine & Steinbugler, 2006). This research adopted case study methods (Yin, 2014) and consisted of two phases: Phase 1: Collaborative design between myself the researcher and the teacher. Phase 2: Teacher implementation of the antiracist literacy curriculum in his classroom with myself as reflective coach. Making use of qualitative, ethnographic methodologies (Marshall & Rossman, 2014), I collected data around the teacher's design process and his implementation of the design

within his classroom and analyzed all data using an inductive approach of qualitative data analysis (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). Findings suggest a need for teachers to create antiracist units of study within the official curriculum, build such curriculum upon their own conceptual frameworks, and engage in extensive, recursive, and reflective conversations with peer-researchers around relevant texts, tools, and practices. Findings related to what knowledge, tools, and practices where brought to designing this type of curriculum point to the effective nature of teachers developing their own frameworks of racial literacy by drawing on their existing personal, political, and professional racial knowledge and identities. This study contributes to the literature on dialogue in racial literacy instruction (Bolgatz, 2005) as well as literature on antiracist curriculum and a multiliteracies pedagogy (New London Group, 1996) that demonstrate various ways teachers can go outside the box yet stay inside the standards of the official curriculum and instruction (Fecho, Falter, Hong, 2016). Furthermore, this study points to the potential of teachers as co-designers of antiracist curriculum and racial literacy instruction in classrooms and across schools.

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Introduction: Research Questions and Terminology

Educational researchers still have much to understand about the processes of designing and implementing curriculum that can help students learn and practice racial literacy. This dissertation describes a yearlong ethnographic case study (Yin, 2014) spotlighting how a teacher designed and implemented an *antiracist* (Dei, 2006; Ohito, 2016; Troyna & Carrington, 2011; Wagner, 2005) seventh-grade reading and writing curriculum for his linguistically and culturally complex classroom. In a time of increasing racial and linguistic diversity in student populations, more studies looking at specific literacy classroom interactions in order to better understand how teachers and their students use language around race and racism as tools to position themselves as participants of a classroom and how that participation effects literacy learning (Vetter, 2013). This case study aimed to build on and continue the conversation around how teacher knowledge, identity, and agentic processes influence how literacy teachers instruct racially, culturally, and linguistically complex youth particularly in contexts of curriculum standardization coupled with high stakes assessments. This includes specifically addressing what literacy teachers can do to practice and sustain reading and writing practices in the curriculum that foster and build on the multiple language and literacy skills of their students (Ball, 2009; Ball, Skerrett, Martinez, 2011). Simultaneously, we know that race and language are two, often overlapping spaces of subjugation for many historically minoritized students (Ball, 2002; Bell, 1992; Dixon &

Rousseau, 2005; Freire & Macedo, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Leonardo, 2003; Prendergast, 2003; Tate, 1997).

A goal of this study was to clarify ways that literacy teachers can develop their students' racial literacy (Rogers & Mosley, 2006; Sealey-Ruiz, 2012, 2013; Sealey-Ruiz & Greene, 2011; Skerrett, 2011) through instruction and draw on their own and their students' existing racial literacies and knowledge. Furthermore, this study aimed to explore the planning, teaching and learning of a reading and writing curriculum that is antiracist in order to develop the racial literacy of students.

Literacy teachers working with students in today's classrooms are too-often pressured by the current educational environment of high stakes testing and curricular control (Au, 2007) that occupy their instructional time to pass tests that have little relevance to students' literate lives, linguistic repertoires, or linguistic flexibility. The issue, then, for language and literacy research, is that more research is needed to explicitly show how reading and writing teachers can exercise agency in balancing and negotiating the constraints of school demands while building on their students' language variation and leveraging the linguistic diversity of their students (Stapleton, 2010).

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following questions were used to guide the research: 1. What is involved in the process of designing an antiracist literacy (reading and writing) curriculum? 2. What knowledge, tools, and practices were brought to and emerged from designing this antiracist literacy curriculum? 3. What is involved in the process of a teacher implementing an antiracist reading and writing curriculum? 4. What are the effects of

implementing an antiracist reading and writing curriculum on classroom interactions, on teacher learning, and on students? These lines of inquiry were addressed in a context that includes students who are indeed racially and linguistically complex.

The location of this study was Contender Middle School (pseudonym), in a community approximately 10 miles outside a rapidly growing metropolitan area in Texas. According to the school district website, approximately 60% of the students at Contender are identified as Hispanic and 40 % as African-American. The students' racial and linguistic complexities are not necessarily reflected in the district's demographic report. This school is situated in a growing school district with urban characteristics, which overall, similarly to Contender, has approximately 60% Hispanic students, 26% African-American students, and the rest, White. The teacher participant, Mr. François, was at the time of the study, a 40-year-old male who self-identified as Black. Mr. François was alternatively certified and was entering his third year of teaching seventh-grade English Language Arts and local state History, which at Contender was labeled *Humanities*. Prior to teaching, Mr. François worked as a journalist, news anchor, and Hip Hop artist in the area for 15 years.

TERMINOLOGY

Due to the complex and nuanced nature of the terms I have used thus far, I hope to clarify the two main concepts centered at the heart of this study – racial literacy and antiracist curriculum.

Racial Literacy

Racial literacy is by no means a novel educational objective. John Dewey (1916) determined that encouraging students to understand and confront racial differences is a particularly critical function to enact in educational settings in American democracy. Educational philosophers and literacy scholars have long recognized that due to the pervasive racial issues throughout official curricula, students must receive an educational foundation in racial literacy.

In general popular cultural terms, racial literacy is considered to be the practice of being able to read, recasting, and resolve racially stressful moments (Stevenson, 2014). More specifically, racial literacy in teaching and learning practice allows teachers to examine, discuss, challenge, and take action in situations that involve acts of racism or disrupt systemic racism through reading and writing in their classrooms (Ohito, 2017; Skerrett, 2011; Twine, 2004; Twine & Steinbugler, 2006).

Racial literacy can often take a life-time to develop (Wetzel & Rogers, 2015). Though complex and nuanced, racial literacy could theoretically be developed in the following ways: 1) reflecting on current and historic instances of interest convergence (Bell, 1980; Guinier, 2004); 2) paying attention to ones own and others' white privilege (Twine, 2003); 3) reading about, discussing, and writing as a response to racial issues and racism (Rogers & Mosely, 2006); 4) working towards a so-called 'sustained and strategic' approach to incorporating issues of racism into teaching (Skerrett, 2011); and, 5) eventually designing frameworks to assess racial literacy development as a type of pedagogy (Sealey-Ruiz & Greene, 2011).

According to Sealey-Ruiz & Greene (2011), teachers who wish to enhance their

racial literacy, they may consistently apply the following: 1) read and engage with texts that take a so-called critical perspective and learn language to discuss, problematize, and refute racialized stereotypes and racist systems; 2) engage in thoughtful self-examination of one's own privileges; 3) recognize need for and accept task of holding everyone accountable for practicing racial literacy in their contexts; 4) discussing and critiquing personal experiences with race and racism.

Antiracist Curriculum

One potentially powerful way to address, practice, and develop racial literacy is through antiracism in education (Dei, 1996, 2000, 2006) or what I call in this study, antiracist curriculum.

Dei's (1996) ten tenants of antiracism can be summarized as the following: 1) Race is socially constructed, but racism is real. 2) Racism is one of many other intersecting forms of oppression. 3) White privilege and European colonization warrants interrogation. 4) Euro-American dominance of 'what counts' as knowledge ought to be critiqued. 5) To co-exist within ones racist context, change must start within the individual self. 6) Claiming one's own identity is a political act, a human right, and a complex process. 7) So-called 'inclusivity' requires confronting the challenges of 'diversity' and 'difference' 8) Educators have a responsibility to critique the transitional systems of schooling in place. 9) Dominant ideologies of student's 'success' deserves re-evaluation. 10) Educators can plan empowering partnerships between students, teachers, parents, and the community. These ten concepts inspired and guided both my thinking

and planning as I co-designed curriculum with Mr. François (pseudonym), the teacher participant of this study.

According to Nieto (1996) to be antiracist means to work affirmatively to combat racism, which requires making antiracism an explicit part of any social justice oriented curriculum. Antiracism requires teaching students skills in confronting racism and not letting them be isolated, alienated, or punished for naming racism when they see it. If developing productive and critical citizens for a democratic society is an important goal of public education, antiracist teaching behaviors are helping to meet that objective (Nieto, 1996, p. 210).

CONCLUSION

Considering the definition of these terms, it seems important to acknowledge that teachers and students discursively build the racial worlds they participate in by use of their daily language (Bell, 1992; Morrison, 1993). Anytime educators classify, categorize, or label students, they participate in the construction of race as a social construct. Systemic privileges as well as various forms of oppression are based on how these labels and classifications shift in their meanings over time. This is why racial literacy is more relevant and crucial than ever before. Racial literacy attempts to analyze the connections between texts, discourses, and the social practices and construct racism. Thus, antiracism and antiracist curricula offer teachers and students potentially powerful opportunities to productively and discursively disrupt injustice and move towards change.

Chapter 1: Theoretical Frameworks

INTRODUCTION

This study draws upon and interrelates three primary theoretical frameworks. The first is language and literacy as a situated and social practice (Barton, 1994; Barton & Hamilton, 2000; Gee, 2012; Hull & Schultz, 2002). The second is the role emotion plays in teacher identity (Boler & Zembylas, 2003; Zembylas, 2013) and teacher agency (Urrieta, 2004, 2007, 2010; Zembylas, 2003). The third is racial literacy (Guinier, 2004; Rogers & Mosley, 2008; Twine, 2004) alongside intersectionality (Bonnet, 2003; Cho, Crenshaw, & McCall, 2013; Collins, 2000, 2002; Crenshaw, 1991; Davis, 2008). Together, these frameworks helped explore key aspects of the research questions: 1. What is involved in the process of designing an antiracist literacy (reading and writing) curriculum? 2. What knowledge, tools, and practices were brought to and emerged from designing this antiracist literacy curriculum? 3. What is involved in the process of a teacher implementing an antiracist reading and writing curriculum? 4. What are the effects of implementing an antiracist reading and writing curriculum on classroom interactions, on teacher learning, and on students?

In order to more generally situate the background of this work, I begin this section by revisiting beliefs about the nature of language and literacy as a situated and social act (Barton, 1994; Barton, Hamilton, & Ivanic, 1998; 2000).

Theorizing Language and Literacy as Situated and Social Practice

A multiliteracies approach. This case study aligns with scholars in New Literacy Studies who interpret literacy as a set of practices and processes situated in certain

contexts and relations (Barton, 1994; Barton & Hamilton, 2000; Gee, 2012; Hull & Schultz, 2002). This view assumes that people engage in contextual practices to define their worlds to themselves and to others (Barton, 1994) and that the emotions and beliefs about the literacy practices people 'do' influence what they make, how they think, how they are positioned, and how they position others (Gee, 2012; Street, 1984).

Thus, authentic or transformative reading and writing cannot be taught authoritatively as the coding and decoding of a so-called stable print-based language system (New London Group, 1996). Instead, the interpretation and production of texts has become a multimodal set of processes wherein students and teachers use multiple images, sounds, languages, and print to communicate by technology-mediated means and by building on their membership in diverse communities. Based on this expanded definition of literacy, schools ought not pledge to teach one language and print-based set of skills. Rather, schools should incorporate a much broader range of meaning-making practices into the curriculum because the traditional emphasis on print and a single national language, as opposed to multimodal texts and multiple languages, is not just outdated but detrimental to the growth of equitable and vital economic and political systems (New London Group, 1996) as well as harmful to the literate lives of minoritized students. A multiliteracies approach to pedagogy can offer students and teachers with access and a critical apprenticeship to using new literacies that have the potential to empower them to play more agentic roles in forming their social future-selves in a changing society. -

Language restrictions. Literacy continues to evolve as a social practice and as a

collective resource: dynamic, practical, and thriving in unofficial spaces (Barton, 1994). Some important underlying constructs of literacy and language rest on noticing how people take and make meaning from texts, and observing how people mediate language. The questions guiding this case study point to the social patterning of literacy practices, the complications of literacy, and to multilingual practices in the socially constructed spaces of an English Language Arts class.

Addressing social patterns within literacy practices acknowledges that language choice for marginalized students are often dismissed, systematically and historically. While this dismissal is not new, it is still a problem. The English Language Arts class is a productive space to discuss these dismissals and restrictions (Barton, p. 75-76), particularly to contextualize and historicize tensions in a way that can lead to agency building for students who are typically restricted by the curriculum. Barton provides a helpful set of questions in order to interrogate the institutional restrictions placed about students,

> Who reads and writes, and what literacies, or what literacy practices, do they participate in? What are imposed literacies? Which are taught, which are accessible through education? What are the social institutions that support and sustain particular literacies? (p. 78)

One obvious form of restriction placed upon students is in their own language choice. In an ever-increasingly constraining curricular context, where the standardization shows itself in testing, in the official curriculum, and in the day-to-day practices of English departments, the restriction of language choice is extremely common. In spite of this

normalized status, language choice restriction remains dehumanizing; it devalues the racial and cultural identities of students, thus narrowing the potential of language by limiting it to one particular standard. So the question for the teacher becomes, in this ever-tightening, standardized environment, *how do educators resist and reclaim choice, use, and language variation for their students and for themselves?* As Barton (1994) continues,

> Literacy is always in a language and the introduction of literacy, and particularly mass literacy, is generally accompanied by the standardization of language and the establishment of official languages or dialects. This can be more or less consciously planned. Such a process frequently involves marginalization, even elimination of vernacular languages and dialects, along with the cultures which they support (p. 77).

This study will look into how a teacher confronts these social patterns of language restrictions in order to affirm and empower the language practices of his racially, culturally, and linguistically complex students.

Distinctiveness and dynamism of language and literacy practice. Beyond the social restrictions of language, many broad complications are involved in the literacy practice of youth that avoid easier categorization. For instance, dominant discourses tend to "support monolingualism and…to play down fluidity and change in languages and ignore overlap and similarities between languages." (Barton, p. 70) Even though literacy practices are socially constructed, they are not constant. The pursuit of standardization is dangerous because it inevitably limits the fluidity of language as much as it ignores how

language is socially embedded. For example, the lag time between the practiced literacies of adolescent students and the production of standardized curriculum means that even students who use dominant literacies feel out of touch with what is taught because it was created months or even years ago, most likely in a place far away with radically different contexts and goals.

The complications of individual identities and local communities should impact how English teachers understand literacy in practice. In keeping with Barton's (1994) discussion, therefore, this research does not argue for the construction of an essentialized African-American English curricula or a Latina/o English curricula. There are distinct literacy practices that overlap with certain communities, and individual youth, as well as distinct literacy histories and cultures. Barton (1994) elaborates on this,

> It is important to emphasize the distinctiveness of literacy practices associated with each community examined. In Britain, for example, there is not one blanket 'Asian community'. Rather, people speak different languages, identify with different cultures, and have distinct literacy histories (p.72).

Yet the same desire many English teachers have towards homogenization accepts distinctiveness, but only if it appears in easily catagorizable forms (Paris, 2009). In other words, an English teacher with a classroom full of African-American students cannot or should not merely instruct in African American Vernacular English (AAVE) and expect that she and her students are going to be empowered and transformed because she is 'speaking the same language'. For example, AAVE in the Bronx functions differently than AAVE in the South Side of Chicago, let alone all the many local varieties of AAVE

in central Texas. These complexities and this distinctiveness require English teachers to uniquely negotiate the language and literacy practices of their students at the local community level as well as through the local context of the classroom curriculum.

Multilingual literacy. When we move beyond monolingual literacies and language variation, an even greater complexity arises; multilingual literacies are widely prevalent outside of institutional settings but are heavily limited, policed, and dismissed inside of classrooms, particularly in the English curriculum, especially at a "tested" grade-level. For instance, an adolescent who learns English in order to translate for her mother or father but struggles at standardized tests is too often seen only as struggling at standardized tests. As Barton (1994) points out, the children of immigrants "often have important roles within the family of explaining and translating written letters, notes, and messages" (p. 73). Due to narrow definitions around bilingualism in school settings, most students who practice literacies in multiple languages are categorized as monolingual, according to the state. In this way, institutional literacies unfortunately ignore the practices that students develop to navigate multiple languages outside of class. This functions in similar ways to how different situations demand different varieties of language within any one language. As Barton (1994) states, "Different languages can be seen as different varieties with their own contexts of use supporting their own practices. Monolinguals move between different varieties in different situations, bilinguals additionally move between different languages" (p. 73-74).

While these approaches to language and literacy practices might offer many insights into how a teacher considers students' racial and linguistic knowledge as tools or

as resources in the classroom, there needs to be a way to further frame the issue of how the teacher makes responsible choices regarding curriculum and instruction for these racially and linguistically complex adolescents. To frame the question of how an English teacher can conceptualize the *idea* of English and bring it to fruition through his curriculum and instructional choices with his students, I turn to philosophies of teacher identity and agency.

Theorizing the Role of Emotion in Teacher Identity and Agency

My aim of understanding teacher identity is wrapped up in understanding literacy classrooms. So because I wanted to look at how reading and writing around a social justice oriented curriculum occurs. I believe that by documenting that process, either researchers or teachers or teacher researchers could use this work in helping map out a path. Spotlighting a teacher who already claimed to identify with antiracist ideologies – helped me more deeply consider how teachers - literacy educators – teachers of reading and writing - construct / understand their identities as they relate to literacy? The 'curriculum design' theory I originally approached data collection with, began as a curriculum collaboration/project devoted to 'developing/enacting racially and linguistically conscious' (cite) approaches to literacy instruction. Bomer & Bomer (2011) aim for curriculum that includes: (list reading and writing for social change agenda here). Change is possible through literacy, though reading, and through writing, social injustices can be dismantled. Cultural consciousness (Spears-Bunton, 1989; Gay, 2003) and racial literacy (Guinier, 2004; Twine, 2004) require such linguistically and politically complex identity work, I wish to spotlight specific social, cultural, and arguably, emotional

discourses (Zembylas, 2003) and practices vital in this type of identity development and agency.

Identity Construction. Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner, and Cain (1998) define identity construction as a complex, cultural negotiation of self-understanding. People, situated in particular contexts, are constantly engaged in the process of telling others who they are as well as telling themselves, and then attempting to play the role of being who they say they are. People shape whom they are through their activities and in relation to the types of people they are surrounded by and develop distinct identities in *figured worlds*. Holland et al. broadly define *figured worlds* as "socially produced, culturally constituted activities" (pp. 40–41) where people come to cognitively and procedurally perform new self- understandings. This dynamic interaction of self-understandings, especially the self-understandings with strong emotional resonance, is what they refer to as identities (p. 3). People's identities are improvised (p. 4) and are lived in and through activity and so must be conceptualized as they develop in social practice (p. 5). In theorizing how identity is constructed and produced, Holland et al. (1998) propose three processes for the production of both private and social identities: positionality, space-authoring, and world making (p. 6).

Positionality. *Positionality* concerns the positions "offered" to people in various figured worlds (i.e., a "loud student" or "bad student" or "successful student"). Holland et al. assert that *positionality* is an analytically separable counterpart to figuration because when positioned, people are limited to varying degrees of accepting, rejecting, or

negotiating the identities being offered to them. One's *positionality* is also inextricably 'linked to power, status, and rank' (Holland et al., p. 271)

In the case of this study, examination of the teacher participant's *positionality* will involve negotiating the identities that have been placed on him, such as "the Black male role model" or any other labeled role *ascribed to him*. They are likely many more racial, linguistic, and cultural identities that have been attributed to Mr. François, especially regarding his community involvement and work as a Hip Hop artist.

Space-authoring. However, identities are not just ascribed. There are identities Mr. François has actively pursued and authored himself in a process of *space-authoring*, Holland et al.'s (1998) second process. Space authoring refers to the process whereby 'Bakhtin's rendition of the normal world is faced by any person or collective' (Holland et al., p. 272). Holland et al. view this process as more liberating as it involves identity work and sense-making through various and multiple internal dialogues (authorings of the self) which occur in particular social and ideological spaces. For example, Mr. François actively authors a particular identity as a hip-hop artist, independent of the positional identities ascribed to him as a teacher of English Language Arts and History. Mr. François spoke directly to this notion in an autobiographical reflection,

> My music became a way to bring many different types of people into the same spaces, to find ways of relating to one another. Instead of compartmentalizing the different facets of my identity, I've learned over time to instead courageously converge them (Personal Correspondence, July 2015).

Thus, in building agency, his *space-authorship* appears to function as an essential part of how he makes sense of and authors his own selves. Through Hip Hop, Mr. François is able to respond intentionally, create catharsis, and face, what he calls, his "racial identity paranoia" (Personal Correspondence, July 2015).

World-making. Whereas *space-authoring* functions a somewhat emancipatory move away from the identities others ascribe onto individuals, Holland et al.'s third context, *world-making*, implies that people grow new skills to participate in new situations through social play. In the case of this English teacher, *world-making* might include adapting or creating innovative curriculum, developing a different discourse for addressing race, racism, language, and culture in his classroom, or any other possible imagined evolution; the space for potential transformation. Simultaneously, *world-making* for Mr. François might include the activities, discourses, performances, etc. that he intentionally engages in developing a new identity as a new graduate student in a local university. For example, Mr. François creatively imagined the possible texts to use in Unit Plan focused on the film *Selma* (DuVernay, 2014) by listing and compiling relevant resources. He wrote:

> I want to hear your ideas on this. *Selma* connects well to many other texts I've used this year: *Mother to Son* by Hughes, *If We Must Die* by McKay, *good kid* by Kendrick Lamar, *The Children's March, The Great Debaters*… and that's just of the top of my head. What do you think? (Teacher Participant, email correspondence, June 2015).

The identity work Mr. François displayed a type of *world-making* that considers or

estimates the possibilities of what devising and teaching an antiracist curriculum in his class might look like. All and any of his figured worlds held the potential for the creation of new ways of thinking, talking, learning, and teaching. In addressing how this teacher conceptualizes the subject of English, and the part he plays in the language and literacy learning of his students, according to Holland et al. (1998), identity and self are about how people come to 'figure' out who they are through the 'worlds' they take part in. The impact of these figured worlds is gaged through how they develop and are re-created by, often constant, work with others. In the case of Mr. François, the importance of those activities of English teaching – the planning, instruction, and reflection involved – is crucial, not merely to the concept of his figured worlds, but also across racial self-identification, language uses, and cultural practices. In other words, the activities of his figured worlds intersect with the racial, linguistic, and cultural practices that contribute to his identity construction (Urrieta, 2007; Hatt; 2007).

Using Holland et al.'s (1998) theory of identity and their concept of figured worlds, Urrieta (2007) provided an overview of how twenty-four Mexican American teachers came to produce Chicana/o Activist Educator identities. The desire to raise consciousness (teach for social justice *pero con ganas*) and "give back to the [their] community" became a crucial important part of this identity. Using an ethnographic interview as well as a life history interview methodology, this study specifically focuses on the participants' conceptual and procedural identity production in local Chicana/o activist figured worlds, mostly in higher educational settings such as colleges and universities. In these places, these local figured worlds, the participants created a more

complex process of identity production that was both conceptual and procedural. A relevant aspect of the findings worth considering is that this study also shows that there is not a rigid or sequential pattern in this process of identity production. It was people (who self-identified as Mexican Americans) with particular life experiences that were more easily recruited or drawn into particular figured worlds (but exposure to Chicana/o activist figured worlds did not necessarily lead to the identity production of activists). A particularly important piece for Urrieta's (2007) participants was "reanalyzing personal past experiences through a racialized lens, and learning to testify about past experiences with racism" (p. 131).

Most of Urrieta's (2007) participants drew from their personal past experiences, community knowledge, community lore, and the value of their informal cultural education to make new sense of the world. The way these teachers expressed feelings of anger against the institution of white supremacy and wishes to be exclusively in the company of other Chicanas/os, suggests the power of investigating *emotion* as a vehicle for teacher self-knowledge and transformation. Emotional intensity and teaching (emotional intelligence, labor, understanding, etc.) in secondary teaching is too-often characterized by more professional and physical distance, leading many teachers to treat emotions as intrusions in the classroom (Hargreaves, 2000). However, I believe that investigating the emotional components of teacher identity can be a site of self-knowledge and self-transformation.

Emotional work. Zembylas (2003) draws on the significance of teachers' emotions in the construction of teacher identity. Similar to Holland et al. (1998),

Zembylas (2003) suggests that teacher identity is constantly *becoming* within a context embedded in power relations, ideology, and culture; however, he adds a focus on the role of emotion in that identity formation. In theorizing about teacher identity, Zembylas (2003) argues that an exploration of the emotional components of teacher subjectivities yields a richer understanding of the teacher self. This is beneficial to the work of this study because it begins with the assumption that meanings and sentiments in the identity growth Mr. B transacts with as an African American male teacher are complicated and dynamic (as opposed to assumptions that there is a singular 'teacher-self' or an essential 'teacher identity' hidden beneath the surface of teachers' experiences). For instance, an assumption evident in popular cultural myths about teaching would be the idea that the teacher is the expert or that the teacher is self-made (Zembylas, 2004, p.108). Zembylas' focus is on "exploring the messy meanings of teacher identity as it comes to be constituted through social interactions, performances, and daily negotiations within a school culture that privileges emotional self-discipline and autonomy" (p.108-109). As an example, in my case study, attention would be given to exploring the multiple layers of identities and emotions as they evolve through Mr. B's interactions, performances, and negotiations within a racially, culturally, and linguistically complex middle school context where African American male teachers are expected to be 'the role model' for students of color, particularly for Black boys.

This approach to identity also implies that self-construction (construction of the selves) has to happen in order for teacher identity work to flourish. Zembylas argues,

> The practice of subjectification is fundamentally linked to a project of identity in which emotions are inextricably bound with certain ways of exercising power and, in turn, with teachers' relations with themselves and others. Thus, a genealogy of teacher subjectification focuses directly on the practices that locate teacher in particular emotional regimes. It accounts for the processes by which identity and the emotional rules act upon the conduct of the teachers (p. 120).

This type of power play is complicated and emotional work, as teachers are often represented and acted upon as if they were people of a particular type. However, the teacher-self, as produced in the performance of it, is "constantly contested and fractured by the intersection of activities, judgments, emotions, and desires" of the teacher, the students, colleagues, and administrators (Zembylas, 2004, p. 123). In order for Mr. B to be a racially literate teacher who focuses on anti-racist teaching and linguistic inclusion in a limited time-frame, he will make choices that are likely to exclude particular parts of the curricula. He will have to go through the emotionally challenging task of asking himself, *what am I consciously including, and what will I have to exclude in order to teach in a way that represents my literacies and the multiple strengths of my students?* Given that there are many spaces of exclusion and inclusion based on emotions, it is important to recognize the multiplicity, heterogeneity, and possibility that are often masked by designations of a unified or standard 'teacher identity,' as in certain disciplining conceptions of 'professionalism'.

Emotional discourse and performances. On the one hand, the existence of a stereotypical English teacher as a passionate fan and advocate 19th century British

literature is a type of heterogeneity. As Zembylas (2004) explains,

> The challenge is to show how these identities (and the emotional discourses and performances that constitute them) are produced by, and in turn produce, teachers; and to do so in ways that subvert the normalizing assumptions that underlie the notion of a common 'teacher identity' (p. 124).

For example, emotional discourse and performances can include frustration, disappointment, agitation, and powerlessness; these emotional acts are often constructed and then constitute one's subjectivity in teaching. Zembylas' ideas, similar to the work of Holland et al. (1998), invites teachers to leave the familiar stories of learned habits, beliefs, and thoughts so that they can begin to analyze themselves (p. 124). For instance, this might entail asking the teacher participant to critically analyze how he came to be regarded, and to regard himself, as an 'English teacher,' and what emotional discourses and performances are constructed around that notion.

While this type of reflection is certainly possible, it is difficult and requires considerable effort. Zembylas describes two specific strategies: (1) becoming aware of the tools that govern ones emotions and subjectivities, and (2) creating strategies of resistance and self-formation through reformulating emotion discourses and performances (p. 127). He further argues that the on-going deconstruction and subversion of emotional rules coded in various 'grounds' (i.e., morality, utility, efficiency, professionalism) is a helpful way to resist or contest the forms of subjectivities and the emotional regimes that have been intended for them. Zembylas elaborates, "In disputing their subjectivites, teachers are engaged in an exercise of responsibility and resistance.

This may not guarantee any kind of 'freedom,' but it begins to offer strategies for the care of the teacher-self" (p. 127).

Agitation. One example of this type of emotional resistance work and *space-authoring* (Holland et al., 1998) might be practiced through a distinctive characteristic J. Staples calls the *agitator identity* (2002). While the many 'landscapes of action' (Holland et al., 1998) in the life of the teacher participant, Mr. B, have yet to be described, I argue that race, language, and culture can be understood as constructs that influence his perceived, subjective, and emotional being, as well as his dynamic *becoming*. Staples (2002) argued that the *agitator identity* trait carries the potential to develop promising pedagogical practices because it can assist peoples' counter-oppressive thinking and action (Staples, 2002, p. 54). The *agitator identity* seems like a relevant example of what emotional and performance discourse (Zembylas, 2003) might look like in this case study of an African American male English teacher. The notion (or emotion, or performance) of *agitation* refers directly to Fredrick Douglass's (1857) political and emotional model of being 'always agitating, but never agitated'. In a speech regarding the protest and struggle against the racist and sexist propaganda and policies in the West Indies, Douglass's "emphasis on agitation as a facilitator of freedom, power, and change conveys the important of assuming an assertive, conscientious, and receptive sensibility in social justice work, including teaching" (Staples, 2002, p. 65). Additionally to Douglass, the work of Black feminists (Collins, 1990; hooks, 1989, 2000) influenced Staples to further conceptualize agitation. Staples (2002) describes an *agitator* this way,

> … an individual who repels censorship of self and 'others' by re-naming,

> critically questioning, and transforming wounding words, images, and practices that are rendered valid by senses of superiority, twisted humor, or titillation; an *agitator* openly and frequently indicts the patriarchal, White, social, and capitalist establishment and other domineering structures in societies, political arenas, and economies (p. 65).

Mr. François also identifies with the scholarship of W.E.B DuBois, Paulo Freire, and bell hooks. Simultaneously, administrators from central office 'identify him' as a 'leader' because of his 'commanding presence', which is something Mr. François is not completely comfortable with. While the realization of the *agitator identity* may not be particularly meaningful to all English teachers, it is highly likely that for Mr. François, a self-identified 'scholar emcee', *agitation* might provide him with an emotional discourse and another type of *space-authorship* to resist and rename the re-ascribed identities that attempt to claim him.

The backgrounds of teachers, along with the curriculum that teachers create, play large parts in how they take on their *becoming*. Skerrett (2008) studied 15 English teachers in order to look at teacher identity and agency in connection to antiracist curriculum. In the case of those teachers, agency in relation to antiracist teaching had taken place due to prior experiences in the teachers' lives. As Skerrett (2008) writes,

> Teachers now work with increasingly standardized curriculum. Therefore, it is vital that teacher educators examine with teachers how their biographies impact their agency in relation to culturally responsive teaching and provide them with opportunities to develop strong identities as culturally responsive educators (p.

1824).

Through my work with this teacher participant, I attempt to reveal how his biography and his lived experiences continues to shape his anti-racist stance, as well as his role in *agitation*, particularly in regards to how that might fuel greater *space-authoring* both for himself and the students in his classroom.

Referring back again to how Urrieta's (2007) participants were able to draw on their experiences, community knowledge, and the value of their important and informal cultural education to make new sense of the world, it seems crucial to consider the full spectrum of a teacher's identity. While understanding aspects of how those teachers (Urrieta, 2007) expressed anger against white supremacy and showed desire to be exclusively in the company of other Chicanas/os, is powerful, cultural identities are only one aspect of how individuals are labeled and marginalized when teaching and learning in English language arts classroom. In order to reflect the complex facets of identity in this case study, I turn to *racial literacy* as a theoretical construct.

Theorizing Racial Literacy

A goal of this study was to more thoughtfully consider racial literacy as a set of tools with which to move toward constructive conversations about race and antiracist action in schools (Rogers & Mosley, 2006; Sealey-Ruiz, 2012, 2013; Sealey-Ruiz & Greene, 2011; Skerrett, 2011). Guinier (2004) identifies racial literacy as an *interactive process* within which a framework of race works as a lens to explore legal and educational practices, spotlighting and examining tensions and the "dynamic interplay" (p. 113) among race, gender, class, and place. Racial literacy (Guinier, 2004) is

contextual rather than universal, implying that it cannot assume that either the problem of racism nor the solution could be one-size-fits-all answer. To apply racial literacy does not assume that the answer is made evident by thoughtful deliberation, or simply understanding the judgments or insights of an expert. The theoretical roots of racial literacy emanate from Critical Race Theory (CRT). Racial literacy, a concept that evolved in a parallel way within CRT and whiteness studies, has both micro- and macro-dimensions. Guinier (2004) also argues that racial literacy as a belief shifts away from racial liberalism. According to Guinier (2004), racial literacy is different from racial liberalism in three distinct ways,

> Racial literacy depends upon the engagement between action and thought, between experimentation and feedback, between bottom-up and top-down initiatives. It is about learning rather than knowing. Racial literacy is an interactive process in which race functions as a tool of diagnosis, feedback, and assessment (p. 116).

Second, racial literacy emphasizes the relationship between race and power; interpreting race and racism in complex and multifaceted ways, including the psychological, social, emotional, interpersonal, and structural dimensions of education (Gunier, 2004; Rogers & Mosely, 2008). For instance, racially literate educators take into account the emotional and mental toll of racism on marginalized students. Simultaneously, the racially literate teacher is thoughtful regarding the teaching interactions and consequent power-dynamics at play with historically marginalized students (also understanding the complexities of how this racial dynamic changes when

the teacher is a person of color). In terms of structural racism, racial literacy considers the way psychological comforts can mask political and economic interests for poor and working-class whites, which points back to the notion of *interest convergence* (Bell, 1998). While racial literacy acknowledges the importance of individual agency, it does not lose sight of institutional and environmental forces that both shape and reflect that agency. For example, the historical meaning of race as a socially constructed category which functions to maintain social and political hierarchies - as well as the economic outcomes that race creates - outlines the type of active stance people take against racism. Third, while racial literacy never loses sight of race and racism, it does not focus exclusively on these. Instead, it constantly interrogates the forceful relationship between race, class, place, gender, and other such variables. It sees the danger of basing a strategy for monumental social change on assumptions about individual prejudice and individual victims. Overall, racial literacy suggests that racialized hierarchies mirror the "distribution of power and resources in a society more generally" (Guinier, 2004, pp. 114-115).

Twine (2004) conceptualizes racial literacy as a set of "social processes" (p. 881) emerging from her previous research regarding anti-racism in Black studies and Whiteness studies. She provides an "empirical analysis of the 'labor' that White parents perform as they translate and transform the meaning of whiteness, blackness, and racism in their families of reproduction" (p. 881). Twine controlled her focus to analyzing how White parents teach opposition to racism because she was also interested in how Whites attempt to 'translate and transform racial hierarchies" (p. 883). Twine (2004) broadens

the definition of racial literacy to include resources, practices, tools, and "racial vocabularies" (p. 884) that White parents used to "actively train their bi-racial children to resist racism" (p. 882). This approach to racial literacy includes teachable and learnable practices while embracing a helpful conception of Whiteness that fosters anti-racist practices. A key piece of Twine's (2004) contribution is the idea that racial literacy can be taught and learned, an area of significance for English education, particularly for the context of this study. In the case of both students and teacher, while we know that they already have their own levels of racial literacy, we also expect that their racial literacy will shift and likely develop, not only throughout this dissertation work, but throughout their lives.

Intersectionality Theory

Although this study's questions are focused on investigations into constructs of race, culture, and language as forms of both diversity and oppression, it acknowledges theories of intersectionality. As one of the most generative branches of Critical Race Theory (CRT), intersectionality points to the multidimensionality of different oppressions and recognizes that racism alone cannot account for disempowerment. "Intersectionality means the examination of race, sex, class, national origin, and sexual orientation, and how their combination plays out in various settings" (Delgado et al., 2001, p. 51). Intersectionality helps extend the conversation of identity, teaching, and learning further, as it centers around analyzing and discussing how a variety of oppression often intersect, creating unique and varied experiences of discrimination. Originally, intersectionality referred to the discrimination faced by Black women that is not only sexism and racism,

but an experience of oppression that is more than the sum of its parts. Also an anti-essentialist concept, intersectionality refers to the interaction between gender, race, and other categories of difference in individual lives, social practices, institutional arrangements, and cultural ideologies and the outcomes of these interactions in terms of power and power struggles (Davis 2008, p. 68).

Questioning and complicating. Intersectionality connects to the problem of exclusion and marginalization of certain topics and voices from debates that should have been more inclusive and accessible to different minority concerns and interests (Bonnett, 2003). This is where intersectionality has a critical role to play in my study; it puts "difference" and "outsiderness" at the heart of discussions on identity, inequality, and exclusion, and also foregrounds the serious question of power relations in terms of how different groups of people can position themselves in such debates and stake a claim in a more just and fair society. Specifically in this case study, intersectionality helps question and complicate the details of what a more equitable system of English education can include. This strategy of questioning and complicating power relations has instant application-appeal. For example, asking students, how is 'race' gendered? And asking, how is language use related to social class? Such questioning might invite the teacher participant and his students to "make the familiar strange" (Collins, 2000) and allow for an intersectional approach to complex questions of oppression. Both the teacher and the students' racial and linguistic positions in society in addition to gender, class and other constructs that interrelate and intersect with race, are central to this research. For instance, the teacher and the students of this study will attempt to address the issues of

intersectional oppressions of race, language, gender and class through the English curriculum. As another example, the impact of gender on cultural identities needs to be appreciated in terms of how different communities index their complex selves and experiences to others, as well as advance their struggles for educational rights.

The identity concept related to the emotional subjectivities of self-construction (Zembylas, 2003) and *space-authoring* (Holland et al., 1998; Urrieta, 2007) connect to intersectionality in relation to the teacher participant of this study in particular. The experiences and identities of Mr. François yield multiple points of oppression because, as a Black male in a complex teaching context, they represent systemic power struggles. For example, because teaching is such a historically racialized and gendered (typically White female) practice in American society, Mr. François' identity construction, both racially and in terms of his masculinity, functions as an aspect of marginilazation. At the same time, Mr. François is constantly *becoming,* both as an author of his own space, and in the emotional process of evolving as an *agitator* (Staples, 2002). Furthermore, intersectionality applies directly to the lives of the students involved: the economic class status of their families, their cultural heritage, the many languages they negotiate, their gender enacting, the racism they face, etc. The question then becomes a matter of how this teacher supports his adolescent students to stand up against and speak back to discriminating treatment through their reading and writing.

This aspect of learning how to talk about mistreatment based on racism, language discrimination, etc. is in large part connected to building this awareness of intersectionality while drawing on existing *racial literacy* practices (Guinier, 2004) as

well as explicitly teaching the tools and terms of racial literacy (Twine, 2004).

A common thread among these theories is acknowledgement of the dense complexity involved in addressing the research questions of this study. This African American teacher's considerations about English as a subject while negotiating his students' racial and linguistic repertoires as tools or as resources for teaching and learning will likely manifest through strategies, pedagogies, and practices derived from these theories. In the following literature review portion, I attempt to summarize studies of various educational contexts as well as racially and linguistically responsive instructional approaches in English Language Arts classrooms.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Classroom studies in secondary classrooms with racially, culturally, linguistically complex youth have spotlighted how teachers scaffold students' everyday experiences of racism to make sense of historical and contemporary texts and events (Ladson-Billings 1995; Dimitriatis 1999; Tyson 2002; Howard 2004; Epstein, Mayorga, & Nelson 2011) and show how use of Hip Hop, spoken word poetry, and young adult literature as texts for analyzing inequality in schools and society, as well as exploring young people's emotional responses to racism (Henry 1998; Morrell and Duncan-Andrade 2002; Jocson 2006; Baszile 2009; Hill 2009). There is a need for continued research in practicing racial literacy pedagogies, leveraging students' linguistic knowledge, and exploring student's responses to culturally conscious instruction. More research needs to study teachers of color and who are able to code-switch flexibly in their understanding and fluency with AAVE or any other stigmatized dialect (Godley & Minnici, 2008; Greene & Walker, 2004; Godley & Loretto, 2013; Vetter, 2013; Vetter & Hungerford-Kresser, 2014). Lastly, in terms of the gap in examining student responses to racial literacy instruction, future studies could include how adolescents develop literary understandings through use of texts other than those exclusively showing African American culture, for example, to also including Mexican American literature to read representations of Latino narratives (Brooks, 2006).

The main lines of inquiry that guide this case study connect to how the adolescent students and the teacher in this classroom experience a particular approach to teaching

and learning based on linguistic inclusion and antiracist curriculum and instruction. Built around my questions, the areas of research this review hope to highlight include:

- Up until now, how have teachers conceptualize their students' racial and linguistic knowledge, experiences, and repertoires for teaching and learning antiracist curriculum in secondary Humanities/English Language Arts classrooms?
- How have teachers draw upon their own racial identity and literacies, and agency, in conceptualizing the subject of Humanities to construct an antiracist curriculum?
- How, if at all, does this teacher's racial literacy knowledge, practice, and agency develop or change through the process of designing and implementing a racially and linguistically responsive reading and writing curriculum?
- How have students responded to and engaged with this type of curriculum?

This literature review attempts to identify the gaps present in the research in order to more clearly focus on how my study can help fill them. Overall, gaps appear to exist in how deeply teachers' identity work is implicated in racially, culturally, and linguistically responsive reading and writing instruction. Gaps also seem to emerge in the understanding of adolescent student experiences with, response to, and academic learning from such racially conscious and linguistically inclusive approaches. Furthermore, gaps occur in several of the research designs for exploring such topics. With the questions of the study guiding the path, this review is organized into the following overarching sections: strategies and practices of racial literacy instruction, building on students' linguistic repertoires as resources, and attending to students' responses to culturally conscious literacy instruction in English Language Arts classrooms.

Racial Literacy Strategies, Pedagogies, & Practices. I now turn to explore practices and pedagogies of *racial literacy* as described by Wetzel & Rogers (2006) Skerrett's (2011) alongside in the most relevant existing research (Sealey-Ruiz, 2011). In this case study, racial literacy involved a set of tools (everything from social to instructional) that acknowledge both teacher and students to explain, interpret, and act on the pool of practices that include racism and anti-racism. Narratives and counter-narratives are tools of racial literacy—both structuring, representing, and spot-lighting lived experiences and offering an invitation to name one's own experience and reality (Bell, 1992; Perry, Steele, & Hilliard, 2003). When using racial literacy, a person uses the storylines available to them through their experiences and in trying these storylines, develop into a certain type of person (Davies, 1990).

For the purposes of this study, *racial literacy* was used as framework for analyzing how teachers use their own life narratives (re-raced), how we think about our students' racial identities, linguistic repertoires, and experience (as means for teaching and learning in the classroom).

Epstein and Gist (2015) examined how three teachers, all women of color, in New York City public schools challenged the concepts of race and racism building on what Black and Latino adolescents brought to the study of history and contemporary society. Framed by concepts of culturally relevant teaching and racial literacy, the study illustrated how the teachers used sustained and strategic instruction about race (Skerrett, 2011) to complicate and challenge students' ideas of race and racism. Also, the authors explore how the teachers' 'alternate models of pedagogy' (Ladson-Billings 1995) builds

upon and extends the theory of culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995) as it is commonly conceptualized. Throughout the year, the three teachers in this study engaged in several racial literacy strategies: 1) They organized humanities based curricular units around questions of power, resistance to unjust authority, and maintenance and dismantling of racialized hierarchies; 2) The teachers uncovered and challenged students' understandings of racial identities as biologically based and provided students with academically sound views of race/racial identities as socially constructed concepts. 3) The teachers also used their own and their students' experiences to confront issues related to internalized racism and promote solidarity within and across racialized groups (Epstein & Gist, 2015, p. 45). While this work focused more directly on the curriculum and instructional moves of teachers, the authors analyzed the racial literacy growth of the students. They asked questions such as, "What happens when adolescents of color carry inaccurate and/or harmful conceptions of race into the classroom? How might teachers deal with students' essentialized concepts of race, partial or confused notions of racial identity and manifestations of internalized racism in classrooms with students of diverse racial/ethnic identities?" (p. 46). This dissertation study intends to investigate into students' responses to racial literacy and linguistically inclusive antiracist curriculum, with culturally relevant texts, culturally responsive pedagogies, thus providing some insights into the questions that Epstein and Gist (2015) pose.

Some argue that students need more opportunities to learn how to respond to and counter forms of everyday racism (Vetter & Hungerford-Kresser, 2014). This study

investigated how one peer-led group engaged in dialogue about issues of race in regards to an eleventh-grade Language Arts assignment. A racial literacy perspective framed their analysis of three small group conversations. Findings suggested that dialogue in the small group fostered opportunities for students to engage in the following elements of racial literacy: a) hear and appreciate diverse and unfamiliar experiences; b) facilitate problem-solving with the community; and c) create opportunities to talk about race and racism. While these emerging insights address ways in which racial literacy was significant in classroom discourse, it did not attend to the many other ways these complex students were marginalized, nor to the complicated identity work of the teachers. An absence of exploration around the teacher's identity practices in relation to their racially-based curricular discussions. Does not mention other important forms of marginalization that are likely to have influenced the students in the study, such as linguistic racism, sexism, homophobia, and class discrimination.

Turning a gaze towards the racial literacy of English educators, Skerrett (2011) examined how predominantly White middle class secondary English teachers in two racially diverse schools – one in Massachusetts, the other in Ontario – described their knowledge of and practices for teaching about race and racism. The extent and quality of teachers' racial literacy knowledge and practice were considered in light of the literature on racial literacy, racial literacy instruction, and anti-racist education. Three approaches to racial literacy instruction were identified: *apprehensive and authorized*; *incidental and ill-informed*; and *sustained and strategic*. In the case of teachers who were identified as sustained and strategic in their self-described racial literacy practices, there seemed to be

a mix of instructional approaches as well as curricular choices. For example, these teachers consistently: 1) read texts from a critical race perspective, 2) engaged students in discussions of how their identities and development of academic knowledge were influenced by their racial identities, 3) used dramatizations to build students' racial literacy, 4) interrogated the biased nature of curriculum with a more critical and balanced view of world literature, and 5) responded to students' requests for a more racially inclusive and politicized curriculum which required searching outside the official curriculum for anti-racist texts.

In the case of Mr. François, the teacher participant in this dissertation work, my study provides a discourse of the types of knowledge, dispositions, and skills that can be cultivated for effective racial literacy instruction in antiracist curricular agenda. Systematically addressing racism and issues around language ideologies with students will inevitably require a great deal of thoughtful planning. Maintaining an explicitly antiracist emphasis across the seventh-grade English Language Arts team and on the rest of the campus will likely present a variety of challenges, but that would help promote a culture where everyone feels empowered to develop the knowledge and skills to talk, teach, and learn about racism (Skerrett 2009).

Students' Linguistic Repertoires as Resources

The many complex and fascinating language repertoires of youth can be used as tools and resources for teaching and learning in the Language Arts. Recent studies on racially and linguistically complex English classrooms suggest that youth can be encouraged to critique language ideologies, embrace their code-switching as a linguistic

asset, build on each others' language experiences, and conduct linguistic analysis of various grammar constructs and speech patterns (Williams, 2006; Godley & Minnici, 2008; Godley & Loretto, 2012; Vetter, 2013). English teachers are indeed able to promote meaning making and communication while maintaining students' racial, cultural, and linguistic identities (Nieto, 2014; Bomer, 2011; Williams, 2006) by linking everyday knowledge and the academic subject with a focus on the language of particular racial groups (Lee, 2006; Sealy-Ruiz, 2007; Fecho, 2004).

Critical language pedagogy. Godley & Minnici (2008) implemented what they called critical language pedagogy with African American students in a 10th grade English Language Arts classroom to encourage them to develop critical perspectives on language. This pedagogy involved (a) critiquing dominant language ideologies, (b) emphasizing the diversity of dialects spoken in the U.S. and in the students' communities, and (c) raising students' awareness of the ways that they used language for different purposes and audiences. In their study, Godley & Minnici (2008) designed instructional activities where students practiced code-switching in writing and other linguistic tasks during a five-day unit created by one of the authors. They found that such exercises improved students' understandings about the grammatical patterns of privileged (so-called 'Standard English') and stigmatized (AAVE) dialects while helping them apprehend underlying issues of power that privileged SE. The applied critical language (weeklong) unit addressed language variation and dialects, exploration of scholarship about language ideologies and sociolinguistics with students – all of which suggested that implementations of this type of pedagogy contributed to the literacy learning of students

who speak AAVE by revealing and critiquing dominant language ideologies, building on students' existing knowledge about language, and giving students tools to change dominant representations of AAVE. Unique to this study is the helpful appendix, which provides educators as well as researchers detailed materials and resources that facilitated critical language pedagogy in classrooms through specific use of the film *American Tongues* and the novel *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

The authors themselves, though, articulated two limitations in their study that this dissertation will directly address. The first concerns the teacher's whiteness that limited her understanding and fluency with AAVE (p.324) or any other stigmatized dialect. While Godley & Minnici (2008) found that when a teacher invites students to practice code-switching, the students' understandings about the grammatical patterns of privileged and stigmatized dialects improved, Greene & Walker (2004) recommended that teachers themselves code switch to promote students' engagement in effective code-switching and that they model for students how meaning can be affected by language choice.

In my research, a similar type of unit was attempted (albeit, much more extensive), designed and taught by Mr. François, who speaks both 'Standard English' as well as AAVE fluently. The second limitation concerns length. Godley and Minicci believe that "to fully explore the 'dialect dilemma' (Ogbu, 1999, p. 168) concerning privileged and stigmatized dialects, the topics covered in the unit needed to be integrated into language and literacy learning throughout the year." (p. 339). Godley & Minnici (2008) argue that, with more time, the unit could have helped students to create and analyze a language attitude survey for teachers, administrators, and peers, the results of

which could have then been shared with the school community or could have guided students in providing teacher with linguistics-based information about the natural dialect diversity found in any language (p. 340).

Counter-narrative pedagogies. Godley & Loretto (2013) conducted a similar, three-day long version of Godley & Minnici's work (2008) that focused on how counter-narratives of race, language, and identity can foster linguistic appreciation in an urban English classroom. Godley & Loretto (2013) found that teachers can benefit from learning about African American youth language and that students' everyday language can be valued and legitimated by teacher interest. The teacher in this study, a White monolingual woman, created opportunities to: a) explicitly address racism b) structure discussion around student talk, c) speak only to pose authentic/ open-ended questions d) positioned herself as a learner, and e) implicitly expressed counter-narratives to dominant master narratives. The teacher designed and implemented a three-day curricular unit on language variation, identity, and power, incorporating themes of prejudice and racism. Students' counter-narratives resulted from discussion and were not in writing, but rather, in the form of talk on the 'conversation floor' (p. 317). Overall, a theme in the students' discussions suggested that racism rather than intrinsic flaws in AAVE drove Whites' judgment of their language. In their counter-narratives, students illustrated that they were already aware of linguistic codes of power (Delpit, 1988). Also, multiple students described how they codeswitched between SE and AAVE purposefully, depending on the context and their interlocutors, hence refuting the widespread belief that many African Americans aren't proficient speakers of SE. At least one student went

further, suggesting that African Americans have a better sense of appropriate language choices than many Whites. These counter-narratives also built upon emerging understandings of the complex links between language and racial identity.

The students in Godley & Loretto's study (2013) viewed their use of AAVE as just a partial reflection of their hybrid identities as African Americans, adolescents, residents of a neighborhood, and professionals. Furthermore, and perhaps most glaring, is the seeming linguistic homogeneity of the students. It would be interesting to see how this type of work will play out with a class where other languages are represented. In the case of Mr. B's classroom, approximately 55% of his students speak some variation of Spanish and/or Spanglish, a hand-full of students are from the Middle East or Africa, and approximately 40% of them speak AAVE. For the purposes of future research, it would seem crucial to begin the instructional planning process with little to no assumptions about the students literate lives, and to thoughtfully create multiple opportunities for students to tease out these racial, linguistic, and cultural complexities through a process of self-identification through counter-narration, whether that be through talk, writing, or another literacy practice.

Vetter (2013) examined how a White teacher (Gina) responded to African American Language (AAL) in ways that situated students as valuable members of a high school English classroom. This five-month qualitative study in a 10th grade classroom drew from positioning theory and discourse analysis to make sense of classroom interactions with AAL with findings that show that although Gina was not fluent in AAL, she leveraged it in ways that positioned students as members of the literacy community

by doing the following: (a) opening opportunities for students to use AAL in ways that contributed to the community, (b) not dismissing or ridiculing the use of AAL, and (c) maintaining a classroom of respect when AAL was used in ways that disrespected that community. Gina's attempts to situate students as members are *first* steps at valuing students' multiple languages. As Christensen (2009) argued, it is not enough to "tell students to use their home language" (p. 209); instead, students would benefit from teachers who use student languages as "critical resources in learning" (Paris, 2009, p. 444). The teaching of writing, then, might focus more on how to read and write in multiple dialects simultaneously (i.e., code meshing) and from various cultural perspectives, rather than on how to write in a scripted format (Young, 2010).

Spanglish and translating. Researchers have also studied the language practices of Latina/o students in addition to African American students. Thoughtful and responsive teachers can leverage Latino students' diverse and expansive linguistic repertoires (Gutiérrez & Rogoff, 2003) by giving students opportunities to practice and use "standard" English, "standard" Spanish, regional or vernacular dialects of both so-called standard or sanctioned languages, various indigenous languages, *Spanglish*/Spanish-English code-switching, and interpreting, as well as translating in school tasks. Teachers have used bilingual Spanish-speaking students' experiences translating and interpreting between languages to support the within-language paraphrasing.

Martinez (2009) studied language and ideology among sixth-grade bilingual students and found that students used *Spanglish* in creative and skillful ways, and that

their use of hybrid language mediated both conversation and the broader social organization of the classroom, contributing to the creation of a social space in which bilingualism and hybridity were the norm. Martinez found parallels between the skills embedded in students' use of *Spanglish* and the skills that they were expected to apply according to state-mandated sixth-grade English Language Arts standards. Within their use of *Spanglish,* he found a mastery of specific academic literacy skills, including skill and flexibility with (1) shifting voices for different audiences, and (2) communicating nuances of meaning.

While there seems to be quite a lot of sociolinguistic research that documents youths' linguistic dexterity (Alim, 2004, 2007; Orellana, Martínez, Lee, & Montaño, 2012; Paris, 2009; Zentella, 1997), in regards to this dissertation, the work of Orellana, Martínez, Lee, and Montaño (2012) is particularly relevant because their work is based in the classroom. Orellana et al. (2012) report on a curriculum design project in which they worked with a class of 8th grade AVID students all of whom are labeled "African American" or "Latino", in a large urban immigrant community outside a major city. The researchers co-constructed curriculum with teachers to invite students to study their own language practices in different contexts. The research team gathered videotaped data of students in the classroom as well as videos the youth took of their language practices in other settings. The authors focus on one student's engagement in this project, and through multiple interviews, ask how he uses language as a communicative tool in two different activity settings: for example filling out forms at home with a parent, and filling out forms at school. The authors illuminate variations in a particular boy's use of language as

a communicative and meaning-making tool across these activity settings, finding that he drew on a broader set of communicative tools in interactions with his father at home, including multi-modal communicative strategies, than he did in a similar activity in school. They use those data to complexify discussions of continuities and discontinuities in everyday and school language practices. The authors conclude with suggestions for how schools can support students' use of language as a tool for thinking and acting in diverse contexts. A noteworthy point of reflection they provide comes from the role they played as participant researchers who created a curriculum that facilitated the analysis of language practices. While this was their intention, and they argue for the value of such analysis, they speculate if they may have "inadvertently played into another kind of dichotomization of home and school ways with words" (p. 386). In talking about all the ways they talk in the diverse contexts of their lives, but not talking that talk in school, they privileged what schools often privilege: analysis over practice.

Danny C. Martinez's dissertation work (2010) suggests that youth socialize one another through their transcultural interactions, and that language is the vehicle through which this socialization takes place. Ultimately, he argues that as youth interact with one another, socializing one another, they are expanding their repertoires of linguistic practice (p. 35). Martinez adds to language socialization research is useful for thinking about how educators can socialize non-dominant students to acquire powerful academic language and literacy practices, like those connected to standard English (Zentella, 2005). While his work focused on how students talk, as it is intricately related to how they choose to self-identify; this dissertation is also very interested in what students say, particularly

about race and racism. Linguistic repertoire research shows us that youth learn a great deal from each other, through language and about language; hence, they learn from each other about race and culture. The more recent line of research regarding drawing on students' linguistic repertoires in language arts instruction can be viewed as an expansion on long-standing and continuing approaches that prioritize drawing on students' cultural knowledge and practices for teaching and learning, but that do not study language repertoires as educational tools in as much depth.

Teachers of African American students can also use a multiple-literacies approach in their Language Arts instruction to position students' linguistic repertoires as learning tools. For example, teachers may use rhythmic songs to practice pronoun use and use AAVE to teach complex sentences. This includes code-switching both orally and in writing to promote meaning making and communication while maintaining students' cultural and linguistic identities. For example, Williams (2006) conducted a case study of a Black teacher who successfully used a multiple literacies approach to language instruction in her class of 8th grade language arts classroom of mostly African American students. This teacher created a classroom environment in which students were encouraged to use language that embraced their home and community cultures, instead of using Standard English. The teacher emphasized the importance of effective communication with students requiring that she use students' language in order to help them scaffold to more standard usages of English by adding rhythmic songs and call and response modalities in language instruction.

Williams' (2006) study shows that while teachers are required to teach their students' standard grammar, they should not ask students to give up their language or culture. This research highlights the daily dilemma that far too many teachers face in a high-stakes environment where they are expected to have their students master particular (perhaps arbitrary) grammar rules in order to perform well on the state-mandated standardized test. The use of *response to literature* (Rosenblatt, 1938, 1978) is a common strategy that avoids the pitfalls Williams points out while making cultural connections across texts in English classrooms where students speak AAVE.

Student Responses to Culturally Conscious Literacy Instruction

Brooks (2006) studied how students developed literary understandings through use of African American textual features to read various representations of Black culture. In her research, analyses of the novels *Scorpions* (Myers, 1988), *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* (Taylor, 1976), and *The House of Dies Drear* (Hamilton, 1968) revealed that African American textual features are identifiable in these stories. Brooks probed the books according to (a) recurring themes, (b) linguistic patterns, and (c) ethnic group practices. Students showed a high level of engagement with the theme of *beliefs in the supernatural* as well as evidence of code-switching from AAVE to Standard English in written literary responses. The second group of findings emerged from the students' responses to the textual features identified; the five that the students responded to most frequently included three recurring themes (*forging family and friend relationships*, *confronting and over- coming racism*, and *surviving city life*). Students use their own cultural experiences and shared cultural knowledge to make sense of textual features in

complex ways. For instance, by aligning themselves or choosing not to align themselves with text themes such as 'surviving city life', African American students make room for literary interpretation that considers the motivation of characters through both individual and cultural perspectives (p. 385). Another example highlighted how certain students showed their aesthetic stance (Rosenblatt, 1994) by engaging in lived-through encounters in the text and talking back to main characters as they reflected in written responses. Through class discussions, students also engaged in critical examination of decision making when they read about particular characters' conflicts (p. 386).

CONCLUSIONS

Teachers can use critical language pedagogy, counter-narratives, cultural modeling, Spanglish and translation, and instruct with culturally conscious texts to further build on the racial literacies and linguistic repertoires of their students.

Studies in secondary classrooms show how the language practices of non-dominant youth serve various purposes and index a variety of identities. Gutierrez, Baquedano-Lopez, and Tejeda (1999) validate how the hybrid language practices of Latina/o youth served as a resource for learning in a classroom. Orellana and Reynolds (2008) and (previously mentioned) Martinez, Orellana, Pacheco, & Carbone (2008) used a cultural modeling framework to find analogous features between the translating children of immigrants do for their parents and other adults and classroom writing tasks.

Many language variation pedagogies have proven effective in the following ways: sanctioning the use of multiple variations of African American Vernacular English (or Black English), Spanish (as well as multiple dialects of Spanish), celebrating other

heritage languages such as Arabic and other 'minoritized dialects,' encouraging student code-switching their own writing, and incorporating code-switching as a feature in the teachers' instruction as well (Lee, 2006; Greene & Walker, 2004; Williams, 2006; Kinlock, 2011; Cook & Ball, 2009; Gort, 2006; Martinez, Orellano, Pacheco, & Carcbone, 2008). Also, teachers who encourage their students to inquire into the multiple uses and variations of language in everyday use and in their local communities for multiple purposes have been successful at engaging students in the process of challenging mainstream language ideologies as well as raise awareness about language variation (Fecho, 2004; Morrell, 2005; Godley & Minnici, 2008; Godley & Loretto, 2013). Overall, the research highlights how emphasizing diversity in dialects have honored and empowered students in racially, linguistically, and culturally complex classrooms.

Creating antiracist curriculum as well as planning lessons around language inclusivity help emphasize diversity in dialects have honored and empowered students in racially, linguistically, and culturally complex classrooms. Making time to use, complement, and complicate students' language repertoires allows students to learn from each other and hence present opportunities for transformative literacy to occur. At the same time, it is evident that re-envisioning the English classroom as a space to challenge and critically inquire into various forms of systemic oppression is a powerful way to improve and empower adolescent literacy and thinking. Unfortunately, however, there are few studies that present these problems and possibilities simultaneously and take a long-term approach to such inquiries. In short, this is precisely what my study will do.

Need for further research. There appears to be a need for continued research in practicing racial literacy pedagogies, leveraging students' linguistic knowledge, and exploring student's responses to culturally conscious instruction. Specifically with regards to racial literacy strategies, pedagogies, and practices, more studies need to include questions around racism (not just reflections of race and racial identity) with students (Epstein & Gist, 2015). Future studies should address strategies for responding to the ways racially and linguistically complex students are marginalized, as well as attend to the complicated identity work of English teachers (Vetter & Hungerford-Kresser, 2014). Also, studies in this area should include an investigation of the identity work required of English Language Arts teachers who practice racial literacy instruction that is *sustained and strategic* (Skerrett, 2011). Gaps in research around using students' linguistic repertoires as resources seem to suggest that more studies need to spotlight teachers who are non-White and who are able to code-switch flexibly in their understanding and fluency with AAVE or any other stigmatized dialect (Godley & Minnici, 2008; Greene & Walker, 2004; Godley & Loretto, 2013; Vetter, 2013; Vetter & Hungerford-Kresser, 2014). Future research designs should consider the benefits of creating and implementing instructional units that span longer than one school week (Godley & Minnici, 2008). Furthermore, when considering how to build on linguistic repertoires, there seems to be a need for studies that allow students to respond to racism and linguism in English Language Arts classrooms where languages other than AAVE are represented (Godley & Loretto, 2013). Lastly, in terms of the gap in examining student responses to culturally conscious literacy instruction, future studies could include

how adolescents develop literary understandings through use of texts other than those exclusively showing African American culture, for example, also including Mexican American literature to read representations of Latino/a narratives (Brooks, 2006).

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

INTRODUCTION

I selected a case study (Yin, 2014) methodology in order to address the *how's* of curriculum co-planning as well as examining how such teaching might impact the seventh-grade students in this particular context. Broadly, I inquired how a racial literacy intervention is conceptualized and then how it is concretized, implemented, and subsequently taken-up in a seventh-grade classroom. Throughout this project, I collected and analyzed district curriculum maps, planning documents the teacher and I co-created, teaching and learning artifacts produced and used by Mr. Francois such as lesson plans, transcripts of our planning meetings, transcripts of interviews with the teacher and students, content of student writing portfolios, as well as responses of student questionnaires. Mr. François, my focal teacher, was the main participant of this study. His classroom of 60 students, whose data appear in this dissertation, all gave active written informed consent to participate in this study.

In this chapter, I describe Mr. François, myself, and the students in more detail. I begin with a description of the context of the classroom, more about the participants and the setting, and how the curriculum design and implementation worked within it. Thereafter, I describe my data corpus and analytic procedures.

Research Setting and Participants

In this section, I give descriptions of the school, the teacher, and the students. I then provide my own positionality and researcher bias.

Context and Participants

Participants were myself as co-designer, the focal teacher Mr. François, and his *Humanities* classroom of 60 adolescent students, ten of which volunteered and were selected to be focal students (see Table 3.1) at a large middle school with urban characteristics in the southwest region of the U.S. The *Middle Years Program* term *Humanities* in this case describes a required course that merges the curriculum of local state history and English Language Arts content.

The school. Contender Middle School (pseudonym) was located just outside a growing city built around a large public university in the southwest region of the U.S.. Contender Middle School (CMS) shared characteristics with other urban middle schools throughout the state, with more than half of the student population designated as multilingual from working class families. For the previous five years, the campus had consistently scored below the state average on standardized assessments in all subjects, and almost all the students were racial minorities who spoke either Spanish, Thai, or African American English as their first language and at home. The campus, as well as the classroom population of Mr. François, embodied a racial diversity, linguistic variety, and cultural complexity that reflected the purposes of this research study.

Regionally and state-wide, seventh-grade indexes a *writing-test grade*, meaning all seventh-grade students were and are required to take and pass a standardized Writing exam, along with tests in Science, History, Reading, and Math, during their spring semester. Contender Middle School, like all public schools in the state, used labels such as *ELL*, *SPED*, and *504* in an attempt to provide systematic services to all students and to

support them in passing the exams of standard varieties of English. Campus-wide, it appeared that this academic support came at the cost of making space for the languages they do bring from their homes and communities. Typically, heritage language use was placed on the back-burner by most of the teachers and standard English practice skills were privileged across the campus. Despite the linguistic strengths of the students, the official language policy of this middle school valued standard academic English. The atmosphere of the campus was optimistic and orderly, with a charismatic front office staff, diverse leadership, and a thoughtful librarian. At the time of the study, CMS was recognized as an *Exemplary AVID Model Campus*, with dozens of bright university flags and authentic student work decorating each hallway.

The teacher participant was assigned to two academic teams on campus, though none of his fellow team of teachers explicitly adopted an appreciative stance. The school motto was, however, explicit about a concept they called "OTTM" or "On time, on task, and on a mission." The school's principal at the time of the study was the third principal at CMS in the previous three years. This principal appeared to work toward setting an official, strict tone with a focus on academic rigor and behavioral discipline.

The teacher. The focal teacher participant, Mr. François (all names are pseudonyms), was a second career educator (journalism and Hip Hop being his first careers) in his third year of teaching during the time of data collection. Mr. François was in his early 40's, ascribed to an African American Double Consciousness (Du Bois, 1903; 1989) and self-identified as a *scholar-MC*, "racially Black, and culturally a mongrel" (Personal Correspondence, September 9, 2015). Mr. François showed interest in critical

pedagogy as he challenged himself to consider what counted as acceptable language use in this school, especially since non-dominant youth whose language practices were treated as inferior and often placed in courses or pullout programs and homogenized ESL classes.

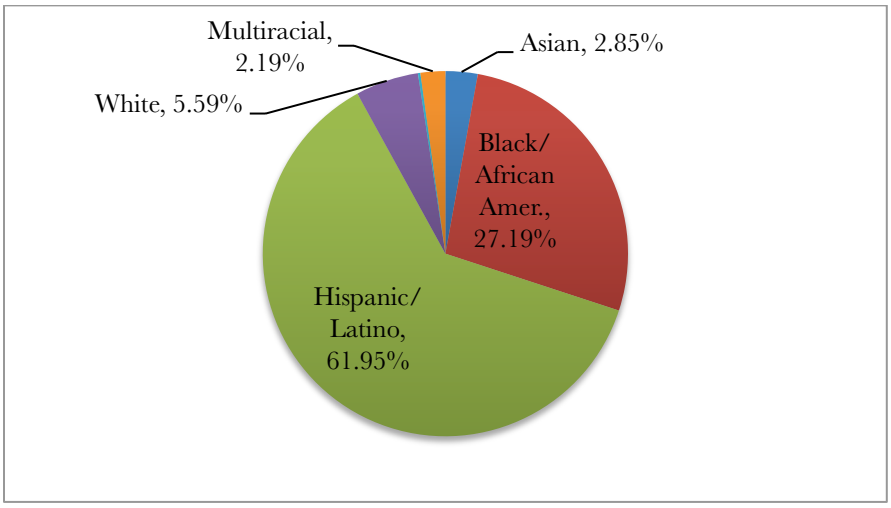
Mr. François was alternatively certified to teach grades 6-12 English Language Arts and Social Studies (History). At the time of this study, it was his third year as a seventh-grade teacher. He had taught at CMS for two years prior, each year under a different principal. During our initial conversation, I alerted him to my interest in focusing on racial literacy and antiracist teaching; he responded enthusiastically to the ideas. This project was an opportunity to follow a dynamic teacher in his third year, as well as an chance to learn alongside him as he embarked on his first year as a master's student in a program focused on educational leadership. One of Mr. François' M.Ed. course professors invited teachers to 'develop an antiracist curriculum' as their first major assignment.

The students. The 60 students I saw bi-weekly were accustomed to rotating classrooms by subject areas throughout their school day. Thus, Mr. François taught them approximately 20 at a time, for an hour and a half per day. The students in this teacher's class represented a wide range of language backgrounds. It was not uncommon to hear African American students interacting with emergent bilingual students for whom Spanish was a first language. Many Black students often found themselves approximating Spanish, and many Spanish-English bilingual speakers would appropriate African American Vernacular English. U.S.-born Latino students code-switched as they spoke to

a recent immigrant Latino students. In a context where this type of language exchange was supported by Mr. François, the non-dominant speakers of dialects or marginalized languages generally felt supported in the context of this classroom (Orellana & Gutierrez, 2006).

During the time of this study, CMS had approximately 912 students in grades six - eight: 291 students in sixth-grade, 303 students in seventh-grade, and 318 students in eighth-grade. According to the most recent language on the district web-site, 78% of the students were labeled "Economically Disadvantaged", 25% were labeled with "Limited English Proficiency", 1.6% were vaguely labeled "Immigrant", and a seemingly low 11% were labeled "Bilingual". This bilingual student percentage was likely inaccurate due to the narrow way the term was assigned by district at that time. The definition and this percentage did not take into account the complex and varied forms of student language use. Of the students at CMS, 27.2% were labeled African American, 5.6% White, 62% Hispanic/Latino, 2.6% Asian, 2.2% Multiracial, and approximately .2% as Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (see Figure 3.1).

Figure 3.1. *Contender Middle School Students (2015-2016), district designations.*



Master narratives (Montecinos, 1995) about CMS proudly referred to it as a *turn-around* campus of students who used to be *at-risk* and but were at the time of data collection *focused on improvements and college-ready*. Montecinos (1995) argued that "the use of a master narrative to represent a group is bound to provide a very narrow depiction of what it means to be Mexican-American and African-American" (1995, p. 293). Historically in this region of the country, characteristics of difference (mostly racial and linguistic) have been measured against and compared to the practices of mostly white middle-class practices; this is reflected in the normalized and naturalized cultural practices of dominant groups (Brayboy, Castagno, & Maughan, 2007) that allow deficit explanations about the cultural practices of non-dominant groups to serve as explanations for academic and economic shortcomings (Valencia & Solorzano, 1997). Throughout the region and in the district, linguistic differences continued to be viewed through a *deficit*

perspective (Lewis, 2003; Foley, 1997). Valencia (1997) laments the view taken on by deficit theorists who believed that "in sum, linguistic difference leads to trouble, conflict and school failure" (p. 1). During the time of the study, 93% of those designated as English as a Second Language (ESL) students were also designated as Latino (see Figure 3.2).

Figure 3.2. *ESL Designations at Contender Middle School*

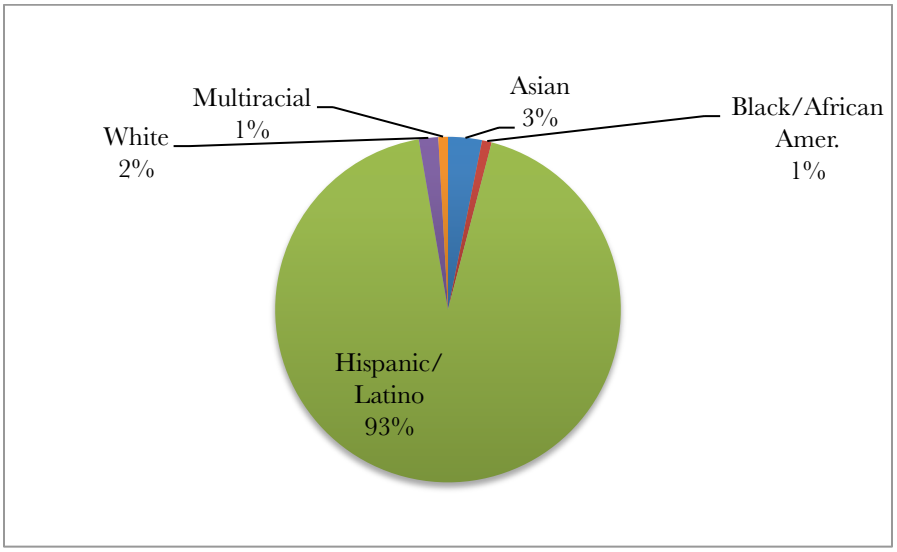


Table 3.1: Focal Student Participants

Focal Student	Class Period	Preferred Language	Self-Identification
Simone	4th/5th	English	Black/African-American
Tamika	4th/5th	English	Black/African-American
Ronalda	4th/5th	Spanish	Latina/Mexicana
Michelle	4th/5th	English	Mixed (Latina & White)
Jaden	4th/5th	English	Black/African-American
D'Andre	4th/5th	English	Black/African-American
Ricardo	4th/5th	Spanish	Hispanic/Latino
Eve	4th/5th	Thai	Asian (Thai & Chinese)
Layla	4th/5th	Spanish	Latina/Honduran
Maria	4th/5th	Spanish	Latina/Mexicana

The selection of these ten focal participants was based primarily on their interests in the question of my study, which I shared and discussed with them at the beginning of Phase 1. All ten focal students were in the same teaching block ($4^{th}/5^{th}$), which meant they had established a close report with each other. They displayed a wide variety of opinions and dispositions around issues of race and racism, but shared a common interest in social justice and antiracism. Due to their enthusiasm and willingness to participate, I offered their names to the teacher, and we came to consensus.

Selecting Mr. François and His Classroom

Though I had interactions with Mr. François ten years prior when I taught in an adjacent district, it was not until the Fall of 2014 that I reconnected with this teacher. As I sat in a colleague's office sharing my research interest one afternoon, I expressed to her the characteristics I sought for this project: a reading and writing teacher who embraced the practices of racial literacy and who was also flexible and motivated to co-construct an antiracist curriculum with me. I also envisioned a classroom of diverse students who would be encouraged to question racial injustices and issues of antiracism. This colleague, who recommended Mr. François was, at the time, co-director of our university's Writing Project that focuses the knowledge, expertise, and leadership of educators on sustained efforts to improve writing and learning for all learners. She had taught secondary English Language Arts for 20 years, fostering an interest in exploring the strengths students brought to the classroom, and how teachers can build on these practices to enhance reading/writing workshop. She highly respected Mr. François, who had recently participated in one of her in-service-teacher writing-workshops and she seemed to appreciate the literacy practices he focused on in his classroom.

Getting a strong endorsement for Mr. François encouraged me. I was also eager to learn that Mr. François and a respected university faculty member at our university were writing a book together about the history of Hip Hop. Additionally, a well-respected graduate from one of our department's Masters program, who was Mr. François' grade-level literacy coach at the time of the study, spoke highly of his devotion to students and his strength as a teacher who took appreciative stances towards students (Bomer, 2011) in a high-pressure context. After my first visit, prior to the study, I dropped in to observe

him in his classroom. I saw dynamic teaching and engaged students. By the end of that day, Mr. François emailed me asking for feedback on his teaching, immediately posturing himself as a transformative intellectual (Giroux, 1984) and a dialogic educator (Freire, 1970). His inquisitive and transparent stance as a novice teacher helped me see that there was potential for a curriculum co-design experience. Our initial conversations centered around appreciating students, critical curriculum theories, and culturally sustaining teaching practices, which seemed productive due our collegial comfort with each other and mutual trust. We engaged in a *dialogic spiral process* where "listening and speaking co-creates an area of trust between speakers – the space between the conversation moves back and forth when the speaker becomes the listener and the listener becomes the speaker" (Kinloch & San Pedro, in Paris & Winn, 2014, p. 30).

Researcher Positionality

As a white-passing middle class straight woman and teacher educator in a primarily white institution, I am and was at the time, privileged to gain the benefits of what Bill Ayers refers to as the *Gringa wild card* (Ayers, 2016). I access my model minority status as an Eastern European naturalized immigrant, and my acquired Whiteness, to avoid attention from police and to skirt racial micro-aggressions. Each year I taught in public schools, I wondered what it would take to plan more explicitly around the work it takes to disrupt systems of oppression and White supremacy in the context of literacy curriculum. As a classroom teacher, I most often taught tested grade levels, so I had experienced first-hand the demands and pressures of preparing students in a high stakes environment. However, having similar experiences does not mean I had an

accurate understanding of what teachers at Contender Middle School experienced. My goal was to make what seemed familiar strange and to continually question the assumptions I carried in order to expand what I could see and learn (Glesne, 2011). Linguistically and culturally, I embody the complexity of a first-generation immigrant as I continue upholding my heritage languages. While I do speak Spanish, I did not speak the varieties of Spanish the students at Contender Middle School speak.

A professional attribute I brought to this work was *cultural intuition* (Delgado & Bernal, 1998), which "extends one's personal experience to include collective experience and community memory, and points to the importance of participants' engaging in the analysis of data" (pp. 563-564). This cultural intuition continued to grow through personal experiences, relevant literature, professional experiences, and the investigative process I engaged in, especially during our co-planning of the curriculum.

Researcher bias. My positionality was embodied in my function as the researcher in this classroom, where I created and played the role of the "primary instrument of data collection" (Merriam, 2002, p. 27), recognizing the impossibility of remaining neutral in my observations and that my biases and experiences drew my attention to see certain things while obscuring others (Emerson et al., 1995). Participant observations helped me better understand the "research setting, its participants, and their behavior" (Glesne, 2011, p. 66). To remain open to the learning process, I kept my perspectives flexible regarding what I observed happening, particularly during Phase 1 as I entered the field, by rethinking and reflecting with Mr. François regarding what I observed and what I might have been taking for granted. I needed to continually interrogate my assumptions

and values in order to broaden my view, considered multiple perspectives and interpretations of the teaching and learning I observed. Also, I knew that my presence in the room mediated interactions that may not have occurred otherwise (Emerson et al., 1995). Being seen as a teacher researcher mediated the ways students interacted with me and interacted with each other when I was present. In attempts to mitigate this, I aimed to draw more on my identity as a learner, which meant viewing actions and interactions that I would have stopped as a teacher with the curiosity of an ethnographer.

Methods of Data Collection

Various data related to curriculum, teaching, and learning in the classroom of interest were collected through qualitative methods (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). The methods on which I drew were ethnographic (Erikson, 1984; Geertz, 1997), particularly ethnographic approaches (Heath & Street, 2008) to collecting and analyzing those data. I also collected data from sources that were external but relevant to the focal classroom in order to situate all teaching- and learning-related data within the broader school and policy context in which this classroom was situated. I gathered data during the teacher's instructional planning time as well as throughout a full year of teaching within the classroom. The methods I used for collecting these data were audio recordings, participant observations, bi-weekly field notes, multiple semi-structured interviews, and artifacts such as lesson plans and student writing. Each of these methods is expanded in more detail below.

Audio recordings of instructional planning. Because the planning of curriculum was a central component of the case study, all discussions surrounding the preparation of

units of instruction were recorded. Audio recording enabled me to capture verbatim dialogue and allowed me to revisit planning sections to re-view them from other perspectives. All in-person conversations with Mr. François related to curriculum, instruction, language, or literacy were recorded. Typically, if I was engaged in a conversation with Mr. François, my audio-recorder was on. Approximately 40% of those recordings have been transcribed and analyzed.

Audio recordings of classroom interactions. Because teacher instruction and classroom conversation were focal points, audio recordings of all classroom interactions were a source of data. Audio recording enabled me to capture dialogue and allowed me to revisit interactions to re-view them from other perspectives. As with my conversations with Mr. François, I also audio-recorded all classroom teaching events such as instruction in large-group, teacher-directed instruction, small group teacher and student directed instruction, and during independent reading and writing activities. While I did listen to all of the recordings, approximately only 30% of classroom interactions were transcribed. In order to decide which moments to transcribe, I would review my research questions to determine which and how much of these data directly addressed my lines of inquiry.

Participant observations. Participant observation involved joining in classroom discussion without waiting for an invitation from the teacher or students. I interacted with students about the reading and writing they did, and even gave instructional guidance when students, the teacher, or when I felt it was appropriate. For the duration of the school year, I was in this classroom twice a week at the least. Due to the frequency of my visits, students appeared to become accustomed to my presence in the classroom by late

October of 2015. Once this process of gaining entry and rapport seemed established, I began shifting my observations from a wide view of the room, to a more narrow focus on particular interactions (Merriam, 1998). During the teaching of the *Power Unit*, which was in full implementation by January of 2016, I began carefully observing interactions occurring during instructional moments, including who talked to whom, whose opinions were respected, how decisions were made. Also, I took note of where students and the teacher sat or stood, particularly participants with more perceived authority versus those with less or how gender roles way have impacted classroom dynamics (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2002).

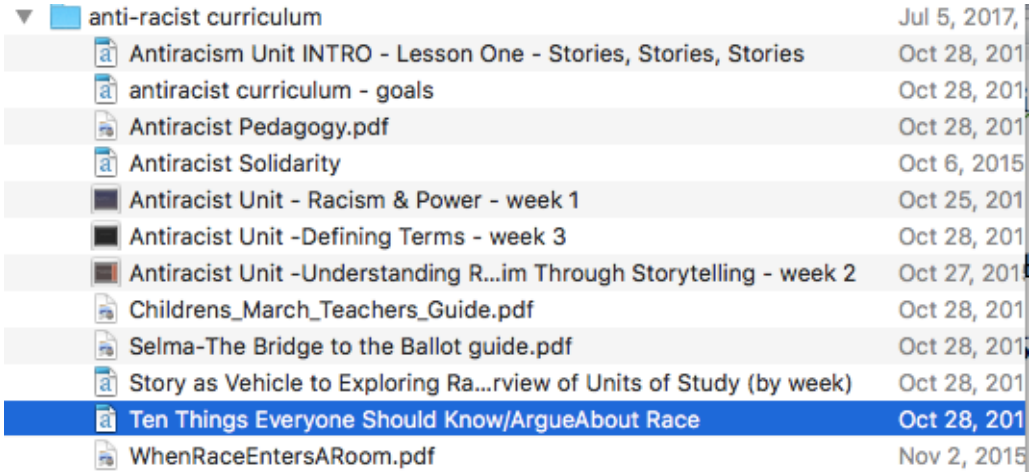
Field notes. I kept an accumulated written record of my experiences and observations in the field (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Emerson et. al, 1995). To document what I observed during my time in the classroom, I kept field-notes in several small notebooks, which included documentation of the larger event within which interactions took place, some segments of verbatim dialogue from those interactions; verbal and non-verbal details of interaction that fell outside the time-frame of the audio-recordings, my own thoughts, tensions, and questions that arose as I spend time in the classroom. Jottings (Emerson el al., 1995) were taken in notebooks while I was in the classroom to capture details of the events, talk, and interactions within the context; Jottings were then written into full field-notes, typically within 24-hours from when they were recorded in the field. Also, informal conversations with the students and teacher were recorded in my notebook as soon after they occurred as possible. This included conversations before the official start of the school day and conversations with the teacher during his planning time.

Semi-structured interviews. Another window into what my participants thought and felt were through semi-structured interviews (Merriam, 2009). Interviews helped access perspectives and interpretations of the social actors within the context beyond the researcher's ability to observe (Stake, 1995). The semi-structured approach I used allowed for me to follow lines of inquiry as they unfolded in the interview and allowed space for my participants to talk about what was important to them. I conducted three formal individual interviews with the teacher that lasted approximately an hour to two hours each and which spread out across the study (during Phase 1, 2, and 3 of data collection). The focus of the student interviews was on how they responded to and took up the reading and writing curriculum implemented in the classroom. In order to aim for an in-depth understanding of student response, I conducted a total of twenty individual interviews of the ten focal students (two interviews of the ten, one at the beginning of the *Power Unit* and one at the end of the year). The focus of these individual student interviews was directly related to their perceptions of racial literacy and the antiracist curriculum in context of their own cultural complexity and linguistic repertoires. The focus of the interviews with the teacher were on his instructional thinking, planning, and practices based on the racial literacies and language repertoires of his students alongside his evolving identity as a teacher (see Appendix B, C for interview protocols).

Artifacts. I collected artifacts and photos of artifacts that shed light on the interactions around the teaching and learning of this classroom. Photos of other artifacts related to reading and writing instruction were also collected for analysis. For example, I collected student responses to and annotations of both independently selected and teacher

selected texts, as well as notes and pieces of writing generated during small-group instruction and test preparation materials. Based on Mr. François' curriculum and instructional practices prior to and during the time of the study other artifacts were included, such as portions of the student-made 'zines, sections of students' writer's notebooks, writing portfolios, posters, music, and art-work. Teacher-produced artifacts included planning documents, weekly lesson plan overviews, daily lesson plans, district materials, district created assessments, teacher creates assessments, and shared notes (Google docs) we used for curriculum planning. Mr. François and I shared multiple electronic files filled with either co-created teaching materials or resources we found useful. An example of a typical shared file is shown in the figure below (Figure 3.3)

Figure 3.3: Artifact Example: Curriculum Files Shared



Phases of Data Collection

Following the recommendation of Merriam (2002) as a researcher to "be submerged or engaged in the data collection phase over a long enough period to ensure an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon" (p. 26), I began entry into the classroom

the last week of August 2015 and I observed two days a week until the first week of June 2016, with the exception of the month of October, when I worked from home. I spent a total of 36 weeks in the field, 14 weeks during the Fall of 2015 and 22 weeks in the Spring of 2016. I essentially carried out three phases of data collection and two phases of data analysis, as highlighted in Table 3.2 (see below).

Table 3.2: Phases of Data Collection & Analysis

Data Management: From Collection to Analysis		
Phase	**Time**	**Data Sources**
1. Phase 1: Entering the field	August 15, 2015 - September 30, 2015	- Obtaining consent from parents and teacher - Obtaining assent from students - Field notes, audio recordings, artifacts - Focal Teacher Interview 1 - Initial co-planning conversations - Curriculum documents
2. Phase 2: Curriculum co-design, classroom observations, & interviews with teacher & students	November 2, 2015 - May 6, 2016	- Field notes, audio recordings, video recordings, artifacts - Focal Teacher Interview 2 - Beginning of the Year Student Interviews: First rounds of interviews with focal students - Interview recordings, interview notes - Focal Teacher Interview 3 - Second rounds of focal student interviews - End of the Year student questionnaires
3. Phase 3: Exiting the field	May 9, 2016 - June 6, 2016	- Member checks during non-instructional times or during a time negotiated with the teacher with both the students and the focal teacher - Teacher Interview with Mr. Davis - Final interview with Ronalda
4. Phase 4: Transcribing & identifying emerging themes	July 1, 2016 - May 5, 2017	- Reviewed jottings & field-notes to select which instructional moments, meetings, discussions, interviews to transcribe - Listened through & transcribed audio-recordings: classroom teaching, post-conference meetings, conversations - Used a constant comparative approach (Corbin & Strauss, 2008) to identify emerging themes
5. Phase 5: Refining codes & themes	May 15, 2017 – September 15, 2018	- Reviewed analytic memos & emerging themes spreadsheets to compare & identify moments to re-analyze - Member-checking with focal teacher - Discussion of how to refine codes & themes with advisor & dissertation writing group - Presenting, revising, & refining codes alongside more other more knowledgeable literacy scholars

Phase 1: Entering the field. I visited with and co-planned alongside Mr. François throughout August of 2015 and entered the classroom with regularity beginning the week of August 24, 2015. I selected the $4^{th}/5^{th}$ period blocked class to focus on once I better understood the enrollment layout. This was the most appropriate group based on the research questions and available schedule flexibility. I co-planned in mid-August of 2015 with the teacher, participate in particular tasks such as helping prepare the classroom, and identified my work with him and clarified his expectations of students and of me as a thought-partner, a cognitive coach, and a participant-observer. Participation in particular classroom tasks included involving myself in team-building activities, conferring with students during reading or writing workshop, giving written feedback on student writing, and sometimes leading mini-lessons. I did, however, attempt to limit participation, as I realized that being too much of a teacher in the classroom would raise concerns about the methodological approach in the study and would also require a shift in the focus of my research questions.

During this initial phase, I began distributing and collecting parental consent and student assent forms from participants, and began to get a sense of the classroom routines. At this point I attempted to identify which one focal class period (periods are blocked into 90 minute increments with the same students) that I observed more carefully in Phases 2-3. Mr. François taught the same curriculum to all his classes. I partly decided which classroom the focal students would come from based on interest in participation and the numbers of students who provided written consent. While this study's focal

student group consisted of ten students (see Table 3.1), general student findings reflect data analyzed from the larger group of 60 students.

Entering the field (Phase 1) lasted approximately six full weeks and then was followed by four weeks of work away from the field (October of 2015) to reflect, organize, and prepare for Phase 2 and 3. Phase 1 is also when I conducted my first (of four total) semi-structured interviews with Mr. François. This first interview was more autobiographical than the others.

Phase 2: Curriculum co-design, classroom observations, and interviews. Phase 2 began in the first week of November 2015 and lasted until late May 2016. I interviewed particular students with parental consent and assent in small groups, in pairs, as well as collected classroom observations as students worked at their table groups. There were three rounds of individual student interviews, at the beginning, middle, and end of the data collection; November 2015, March 2016, and May 2016. The interviews were conducted during non-instructional times such as lunch and after school. One of the goals of the student interviews was to hear how they self-identified, what they thought of racial literacy, and how they identified their literacy learning goals. These interviews typically lasted approximately 20 minutes each, and helped me gain insights into how students viewed themselves, each other, and their responsibilities inside and outside the classroom. Phase 2 included teacher interviews that were scheduled at the convenience of Mr. François. The teacher interview questions encompassed Spradley's (1979) three types of ethnographic questions: descriptive, structural, and contrast. The teacher was asked descriptive questions, for example, about his work and his professional preparation

for teaching literacy, as well as specific questions prompting him to consider his identity as it related to vulnerability and early as well as current influences and inspirations (Lasky, 2005). I invited Mr. François to compare and contrast the ways in which the official curriculum, and his or our curriculum-in-use, did or did not respond to, the academic, social, racial, cultural, and linguistic requirements and interests of his complex student population. Through the interviews, I attempted to glean information regarding his philosophy of teaching, his beliefs about literacy more broadly, some of his language ideologies, how he perceived his students' language repertoires, his views of racial literacy and antiracist education, and how his understandings of all of these continued shifting on account of his experiences (see Appendix C: Teacher Interview Protocol). This phase involved a regular schedule of two observation days a week in my focal class, (4^{th}-5^{th} period) for a minimum of 90 minutes per day (with additional data collected by Mr. François if students from other classes choose to participate). Planning conversations related more to the teacher's evolving instructional thinking, planning, and teaching related to racial literacy and antiracist curriculum. This phase involved observing the entirety of teaching and learning with Mr. François and his students in the selected focal classroom. I counted a total of 180 observation days in the classroom and began writing observation notes both in a notebook and a laptop in the initial weeks of observation and phase in audio recordings to enable the teacher and students to gain a sense of comfort with my presence in the classroom before beginning audio recordings and video recording. I also chose several focal students to interview based on their writing and their participation in discussions of racial literacy and linguistic repertoires, as either observed

in the classroom, or as suggested by the teacher, or both. These focal students included the students whose literacy practices had not previously been valued in schools, students labeled as English Language learners, and/or students who Mr. François indicated as exhibiting outstanding linguistic dexterity and/or flexible racial literacy practices. We expected all students would be engaged, but those who showed resistance seemed at times especially important perspectives to understand.

Phase 3: Exiting the field. As I completed Phase 2 and the school year ended, I exited the field. My date of exit was June 6, 2016, which was the last staff Monday of the school year. I distributed and collected End of the Year Questionnaires to the students (see Appendix D, E, F) and conducted end-of-year interviews with Mr. Davis, another seventh-grade teacher and Ronalda, a focal student. Even though I member-checked throughout each phase, for the last two weeks of the school year I member-check my initial ideas around themes I noticed with the teacher. I showed my appreciation to all involved for allowing me into their classroom lives by helping publish a classroom anthology of students' self-selected writing. This did not preclude me from collecting final instrumental bits of data I found, such as student-created art-work, poetry, and 'zines.

Part of member-checking, which occurred throughout, was to ask students if their experience with the curriculum interpreted their views of themselves and their literate lives as they intended and to make revisions based on their feedback. I also shared parts of their stories with the teacher as a way of sharing what they have taught me about being racially literate linguistically flexible readers and writers in their classroom.

Data Corpus and Approaches to Initiating Analysis

With 252 total hours of classroom observations, by the end of Phase 3, I had much to organize and make sense of. There were several types of data to sort through: student and teacher interviews, focus group interviews, and artifacts of curriculum, teaching, and learning, and my field notes. In order to analyze the interviews, field notes, and audio-recorded interactional data, I planned to draw on discourse analytic methods from the related fields of conversation analysis (Goodwin, 1990), and the ethnography of communication (Hymes, 1962).

Table 3.3: Data Corpus

Data	Transcribed, Analyzed, Used for Dissertation	Total
Classroom Observations	50 hours	252 hours
Planning and Reflection Meetings	12 hours	67 hours
Post-lesson Reflective Correspondence	16 emails	95 emails
Teacher Interviews	3	3
Student Interviews		20
Photos	35	238
Teacher Lesson Plans	21	42
Student Writing Portfolios	55	60
Analytic Memos	18	21
Student *Power Unit* Questionnaires	60	60
Student Reading Surveys	58	58
Student Writing Surveys	58	58
Student EOY Questionnaires	60	60

Artifacts include the following: curriculum planning documents such as teacher-made rubrics for collaborative projects, student projects, essays, and writing portfolios, as well as work samples from focal students other class, photographs of focal students' projects, two interviews with each focal student, three interviews with the teacher-researcher/teacher-participant, End of the Year Surveys of all 60 students, recordings and transcriptions of post-conference discussions between myself the researcher and Mr. François, the teacher-participant. Various data related to curriculum, teaching, and learning in the classroom of interest were collected through qualitative methods (Miles & Huberman, 1994). I borrowed from ethnography (Erikson, 1984; Geertz, 1997), particularly, pulling from ethnographic approaches (Heath & Street, 2008) to collecting and analyzing those data. The methods I used for collecting these data were audio recordings, participant observations, field notes, semi-structured interviews, and artifacts such as lesson plans and student writing. The use of case study methodology is a helpful way to explore the lines of inquiry involved, particularly with the multiple sources of evidence (Yin, 2014).

Stake (1995) asserts that there is not one "particular moment when data analysis begins" (p. 71), but rather analysis is the way qualitative researchers continuously make sense of the world of the case. The process of recording my observations began the interpretation, initial sense-making, and data reduction by the choices I made regarding what I noted – which were all connected to my questions. To further the initial phase of data collection, I engaged in the practice of writing analytic memos (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Glesne, 2011) as early patterns, questions, emotional responses, and anomalies

emerged throughout the data collection process. Through weekly writing, I critically reflected on these memos and used them as a guide for later data analysis during Phase 4 and 5 (Glesne, 2011).

Data Analysis Procedures After Exiting the Field

During Phase 4, based on my trail of memos of relevant moments, I listened through and transcribed classroom data and interviews that seemed most connected to my questions. My initial approach to analysis consisted of using a constant comparative approach (Corbin & Strauss, 2008) for recorded instruction, interviews, as well as written artifacts. Thomas (2011) suggests a constant comparative method of analysis for case study data as a means of finding themes that capture the "essence" of the case while maintaining the wholeness of the context and experience of the participants (p. 171). The process for constant comparison requires repeated readings of the entire corpus of data. Due to my enormous data corpus, I did this with my field notes corpus, as opposed to with my transcriptions. During early readings, important ideas or subjects that I noticed recurring became what Thomas called "temporary constructs" (p. 172). These temporary constructs then guided subsequent readings. Examples and counter-examples for each of the constructs were collected as I read the data again. The temporary constructs that still seemed to fit the data then became "second-order constructs" (p. 172). During the initial inductive coding process, I looked for the essential themes that emerged. Again, the data was re-read with the second-order constructs as the means of organizing. If they seemed to "capture the essence" of the data, they became themes on which I built findings (p. 172).

I then looked at the data or initial themes that I identified through my constant comparative method through various theories of racial literacy and teacher identity and shared these with more experiences literacy scholars and with my advisor. These principles guided readings of my data after initial inductive coding (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). I identified patterns and themes that emerged following a similar process of repeated readings similar to that for inductive coding.

Next, I conducted a thematic analysis (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014) first focusing on how the process of co-designing such a curriculum unfolds. I began looking at the data by reading across the notes – jottings and analytic memos – I took from Phase 1-3 and transcripts of our conversations to notice ways the teacher used his own racial literacies and own experiences to engage with conceptualizing and creating a racial literacy curriculum. After six months of following this line of analysis, the concept of creative compliance stood out, as Mr. François worked toward co-planning an antiracist unit of study that was *within yet outside* the official curriculum. I further noticed that this focal teacher was drawing on existing personal, professional, political identities to develop an antiracist framework for this curriculum. I saw that these topics were directly linked to my first two research questions – namely a) what is the process of designing an antiracist literacy curriculum and b) what knowledge, tools, and practices were brought to and emerged from designing this curriculum? Directing my next round of data analysis toward noticing the types of teaching tools, practices, and strategies, I narrowed the focus of my codes to a more refined search of transcripts for ideas and instances connected *teaching tools*, *teacher knowledge*, *teaching practices*, *teaching strategies*.

From this inundation of these themes (*teaching tools*, *teacher knowledge*, *teaching practices*, *teaching strategies*) in interviews and conversations with Mr. François, my analysis shifted to coding for the ways he conceptualized these issues around teaching racial literacy through the implementation of the antiracist literacy curriculum we co-constructed. My initial codes included terms such as "teacher configuring issues of power" and "students questioning the social construct of race". Using these codes as initial categories, I then juxtaposed those with the temporary constructs (Thomas, 2011) that I created based on the connecting ideas embedded in my questions.

Throughout the spring of 2016, I read through my initial iteration of codes (see Table 3.4 as an example) and attempted to re-examine and connect theoretical concepts and frameworks that assisted my noticing and understanding of particular knowledge bases this teacher and his students engaged with throughout his teaching and their learning of racial literacy. For example, I connected my code of "students questioning the social construct of race" to the concept of *racial realism* in antiracist education. By the summer of 2017, I was ready to revisit and narrow my codes (see Table 3.5) after reviewing my questions and relevant literature. The slight revision of my questions emerged from a re-reading of theory, particularly around the connections between antiracist curriculum and racial literacy learning.

Table 3.4 Sample Section 1 of Data Analysis Chart: Emerging Categories, April 2016

Emerging Category	Emerging Theme	Examples	Sources	Dates
Student conceptions of race & racism	Racial literacy exists on a continuum	"She was like, it's MLK Day, are you doing something?" "I was like, yes, you racist, I'm doing the African dance, thank you very much."	Classroom observation, Tamika & Mr. François Table 3 discussion	1/27/16 2/14/16 3/4/16

While these categories and themes were still emerging, by July of 2017 I began to form what I called emerging insights. In order to ensure the accuracy of these, I continued to engage in discussion with the focal teacher around these. Especially as we planned for and presented at national educational conferences, Mr. François and I re-visited and re-engaged in the *dialogic spiral process* (Kinloch & San Pedro, 2014) we began with.

Table 3.5: Sample Section 2 of Data Analysis Chart: Categories & Themes, July 2017

Categories & Themes	***Artifacts & Data Sources***	***Dates***
Power of youth & youth counter-narratives used as literacy text and as a central aspect of curriculum content	Curriculum conversation Curriculum documents, teacher-created unit of study, both teacher interviews; classroom race & racism discussions	12/2/15 1/6/16 2/12/16
Teacher's double-consciousness/cultural awareness playing central role in understanding students	Interview 1, last teacher interview; Classroom discussions: local police brutality case	8/13/15 11/2/15 3/4/16
Teacher's shift in self-identification (agency increased)	Teacher interview 1, 2, 3; curriculum conversations; "curriculum guy" repeating in post-conferences	8/13/15 11/2/15 5/28/16 6/5/16
Students self-identify in other contexts; students display of racial literacy development	Ronalda's flags; R's AVID project interview; interview with Mr. Davis around racial tension; last interview with Ronalda	1/21/16 3/12/16 5/3/16 6/6/16
Hip Hop & pop culture used for various types of literacy teaching/learning goals (Hip Hop treated as literature, not as gateway to canonical texts)	classroom discussions, explicitly referred to by focal students without prompt during interviews; pre-class hallway conversations	8/15/15 9/12/15 11/2/15 5/21/16 6/1/16
Teacher used then brought out of school literacies into the classroom	MLK poetry performance and concert at H-T University as text; speech at local HS; lyrics of 'Soul Force', subsequent interview	1/7/16 12/3/15 2/5/16
Curriculum enhanced by 'writing experiences' that are multimodal	Pre and post discussions with guest speakers/writers in classroom: Da'Shade, Dr. Beats, Asheru & Sage, Ed & Doc; Caballero	1/12/16 2/18/16 3/7/16 3/11/16

Trustworthiness

Part of the design of this study included the steps I took to ensure trustworthiness. Some of the practices I implemented aimed at strengthening the validity of my findings include:

- Triangulation across multiple data sources, including audio data of co-planning, video/audio data of classroom instruction, field-notes of classroom discussions,

teacher interviews, student interviews, and artifacts of curriculum, teaching, and learning;

- Member-checking with the focal participants to ensure my interpretation of the data "rings true" with their intention and experience (Merriam, 2002, p. 26);
- Searching for discrepant/counter-examples within the data to ensure consistency of emerging patterns;
- Sustained engagement in the context to "ensure an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon" (Merriam, 2002, p.26); and
- Peer review as part of a doctoral student writing group with peers who are also gathering data for their dissertation studies in the field of Language and Literacy Studies

Limitations

One of the limitations of all qualitative research methodologies, including this case study, included an inability to generalize findings beyond the circumstance of the study. Consequent analysis and findings carry the constraints of all qualitative research dealing with small numbers of participants in bounded and unique social contexts (Miles & Huberman, 1994). In addressing this, Stake (1995) suggests that the "real business of case study is in particularization, not generalization" (p. 8). Thus, emphasis lies in coming to know the uniqueness of the particular case. Beyond issues of generalizability, conducting this study within a classroom of students whose literate lives I did not known or had not been previously involved with (during their other academic experiences) may be considered limiting. However, being present during so much of the fall and all of the

spring allowed me to see how students grew in their reading, writing, and how they shifted in terms of their racial literacies and views or use of languages. I also recognized that my own positionality and biases limited the scope of what I saw in the data. To help counter these limitations, member-checking and peer reviews were included as part of the research design.

CONCLUSIONS

In Chapter Three, I discussed the context and participants, the data sources I collected, and the methodology on which I drew in order to address my line of inquiry around this type of curriculum co-design process, the implementation of this curriculum by the teacher, and the ways in which students responded. I discussed my approach to analysis and addressed my positionality and bias as a researcher and as a participant-observer.

In Chapter Four, I will present findings from the co-planning portion of this study, highlighting the variables at play in the process of designing an antiracist literacy curriculum.

Chapter 4: Antiracist Literacy Curriculum Design and Planning Processes

INTRODUCTION

In Chapter Four, I present the findings that address how a teacher designed an antiracist literacy curriculum; what the pedagogical process of implementing that curriculum and teaching entailed, and the affects of teacher learning and student responses. In this chapter, I address the following research questions of the dissertation:

1. What is the process of designing an antiracist literacy curriculum?
2. What knowledge, tools, and practices were brought to and emerged from designing this anti-racist literacy curriculum?

The findings presented here explore Mr. François' experience of conceptualizing and designing a literacy curriculum to be explicitly antiracist (Dei, 1996, 2000, 2006) and spotlight how he drew on what he learned through the design of a twelve-week unit of study, which Mr. François named the *Power Unit*. The unit grew out of dialogue during a planning session (Curriculum Planning, December 13, 2015) on transforming education that he and I, in the role of colleague and researcher, engaged in while attempting to exceed our antiracist solidarity (De Lissovoy & Brown, 2013) and embed antiracist (Dei, 1996; 2000; 2006) concepts within a constricted seventh-grade literacy curriculum. Data analyzed for this chapter included shared planning documents and classroom observation notes from September 2015 to December 2015, as well as transcripts of three extensive curriculum-planning sessions, transcripts of two interviews with the teacher, and 16 weekly analytic memos; all of which had been collected before the concrete teaching of

this twelve-week antiracist literacy unit, the *Power Unit*. Analysis of these data led to the following findings, which will be explored during this chapter.

- Finding 1: Planning for an anti-racist literacy curriculum was facilitated by the teacher working *within and outside* of the official curriculum to establish connections and legitimacy with the official curriculum and his educational agenda of teaching and learning anti-racism (Dei, 1996; 2000; 2006) and racial literacies (Ohito, 2017; Skerrett, 2011; Twine, 2004; Twine & Steinbugler, 2006).
- Finding 2: In this study, the teacher developed his own frameworks of racial literacy and ability to design and enact an anti-racist curriculum by drawing on his existing personal, political, and professional identity and agency as teacher; and identifying a concept or construct related to antiracism that he was already knowledgeable about. The teacher then leveraged his identities and knowledge related to antiracism to support antiracist curriculum planning and teaching. For this teacher, that concept was power, resulting in the design of the *Power Unit*.
- Finding 3: The teacher needed extended time for reflection, deliberation, and revision around curriculum texts, topics, and themes. In this case, a recursive and extensive process of co-planning conversations were essential to the design of an anti-racist curriculum, as deliberations over curricular texts, pedagogical practices, and antiracist theory and research

required the teacher's collaborative and individual reflections with a peer-researcher.

First, I will contextualize the official literacy curriculum landscape in which Mr. François worked, as well as his own curriculum and teaching practices prior to the study within this official curriculum. Then, I will expound on the findings stated above.

The Official Curriculum Context and the Teacher's Curriculum and Instructional Practices Prior to the Study

The district provided Mr. François with two official curricula, a curriculum for English Language Arts and a curriculum for local state History. The Contender Middle School campus was at the time working towards a Middle Years Program (MYP) model, in which English and History were combined (or taught back to back) in what they called Humanities. Essentially, this translated to teaching two subjects in one class. The English Language Arts portion of the curriculum was organized by various genres and focused on basic reading and writing skills. The Texas History (Social Studies) portion of the curriculum was organized chronologically, highlighting events and people that shaped the development of Texas; from the folklore of native tribes in the area, to narratives of agricultural and urban growth. That official curricula was closely connected to official assessments. Every six weeks, students were required to show their understanding of historical facts on the district-issued History test and their capacity to read and answer basic comprehension questions based on various short narratives on a separate English Language Arts test. Table 4.1 provides a visual display of the official English language arts curriculum areas of focus. It also indicates the periods of design and the

implementation timeframe of an anti-racist literacy curriculum (the *Power Unit*) that Mr. François undertook alongside the timeline and suggested standards emphasis of the district curriculum across the 2015-2016 year.

Table 4.1: Overview for design and implementation of unit alongside district timeline

Grade 7 English Language Arts (2015-2016)	Design of *Power Unit* (Identity Unit implementation)		Implementation of *Power Unit*		Testing Preparation, Personal Projects	
	1st Grading Period (Sept. – Oct.)	**2nd Grading Period (Nov. – Dec.)**	**3rd Grading Period (Jan. – Feb.)**	**4th Grading Period (March)**	**5th Grading Period (April)**	**6th Grading Period (May)**
Genre Focus (suggested by the school district curriculum)	Literary Non-Fiction, Poetry; Personal narrative	Fiction & Drama, Personal narrative	Informational text, Expository essay	Persuasive Text & Media, Expository essay	State Assessments, review all genres	Research, free choice
Reading Skills Focus (suggested by the school district curriculum)	Figurative language; place & time influence on theme; elements of a poem; autobiography & fictional adaptations of; messages in media	Influence of setting on plot; plot development through character response;	Main idea; organizational patterns; synthesize across texts	Complete analogies; factual claims, assertions, opinions; central argument; rhetorical fallacies;	Influence of setting on plot; plot development through character response; Figurative language; Main idea; organizational patterns; synthesize across texts	Multi-media presentation; decide on topic; evaluate the relevance & reliability of sources
Writing Skills Focus (suggested by the school district curriculum)	Poetic techniques; figurative language; develop a first draft of/write a personal narrative	Strategies to enhance style; critique literary work; develop a first draft of/write a personal narrative	Respond to text; formulate editorial opinions; develop a first draft multiple paragraph essay	Establish thesis; consider counter-arguments; organize evidence; develop a first draft multiple paragraph essay	Choose organizational strategy; revise drafts; write a personal narrative; write a multi-paragraph essay	Formulate open-ended question; categorize information; record bibliographic information

Of particular relevance to the curricular content of this case study, the literacy learning standards of the official district curriculum are connected to literacy habits categorized into four various overlapping skills involved in writing, reading, listening,

and speaking. As shown in Table 4.2, literacy learning 'knowledge and skills' standards and objectives summary hand-out illustrates a school-issued professional development document issued for all English Language Arts teachers to use. The "*Language Objectives Aligned to Cross-Curricular Student Expectations"* framework of standards shows in more detail the literacy principles to represent the explicit connections of how WRLS was intended to index "Writing, Reading, Listening, Speaking" as the purpose of the class. According to Mr. François, "that's basically what we do in this classroom, all day, all year. We build the important habits. We write, we, read, we listen, we speak, daily, that's how we get better at anything, practice." (Field Notes, August 25, 2015).

Table 4.2. School districts' objectives for seventh grade: Language Objectives Aligned to Cross-Curricular Student Expectations for English Language Learners

Writing	**Reading**
• Learn relationships between sounds and letters when writing about… • Write using newly acquired vocabulary about… • Spell English words such as… • Edit writing about … • Use simple and complex sentences to write about… • Write using a variety of sentence frames and selected vocabulary about… • Narrate, describe, and explain writing about…	• Identify relationships between sounds and letters by… • Recognize directionality of English text. • Recognize the words/phrases… • Use pre-reading support such as ___ to understand… • Read materials about___ with support of simplified text/visuals/word banks as needed • Use visual and contextual supports to read… • Show comprehension of English text about… • Demonstrate comprehension of text read silently by… • Show comprehension of text about ___ through basic reading skills such as… • Show comprehension of text/graphic sources about ___ through inferential/analytical skills such as…
Listening	**Speaking**
• Recognize correct pronunciation of… • Recognize sounds used in the words… • Identify words and phrases heard in a discussion about… • Check for understanding by…/Seek help by… • Use supports such as a ___ to enhance understanding of … • Use ___ (media source) to learn/review… • Describe general meaning, main points, and details heard in… • Identify implicit ideas and information hear in… • Demonstrate listening comprehension by…	• Pronounce the words ____ correctly. • Use new vocabulary about ___ in stories, pictures, descriptions, and/or classroom communication. • Speak using a variety of types of sentence stems about… • Speak using the words___ about… • Share in cooperative groups about… • Ask and give information using the words… • Express opinions, ideas and feelings about ___ using the words/phrases… • Narrate, describe, and explain… • Use formal/informal English to say… • Respond orally to information from a variety of media sources about...

This handout featured the official district-issued *language learning standards* for English Language Learners (ELLs) for all middle school campuses. Approximately 65% of the so-called English Language Learners on Mr. François' seventh-grade Humanities roster spoke Spanish as their heritage or home language, and had been taking content-

based standardized tests in academic English for the past four years since grade 3. Though conventional, these skills listed as the practices of reading, writing, listening, and speaking summarized the official district language learning goals. These official standards remained an instructional cornerstone for Mr. François' pre-study curriculum.

Contextualizing Pre-study Literacy Curriculum and Classroom Practices

I turn now to describing Mr. François' curriculum practices before this study commenced, in order to provide a background to explore his conceptual thinking and design of an antiracist curriculum. Planning around the official expectations for these *Writing, Reading, Listening, and Speaking* standards were written in marker on the classroom whiteboard daily. Mr. François interpreted this official curriculum and re-designed it for daily classroom use in mind while planning and communicating the learning goals to the students. Even though these Language Objectives did align in cross-curricular ways, it could also be argued that they may have been limiting, prescriptive, un-appreciatively directed as intervening with emergent bilinguals, and what many call functional literacy skills (Rubinstein-Ávila, 2003; Jiménez, 1997). The use of terms and phrases such as "spell English words," "English text," "pronounce correctly" assumes a problematic posturing that effectively treats students' language practices as problems to be fixed (Freire, 1973; Freire & Macedo, 1987). While Mr. François saw this, he chose to capitalize on the basic nature of the content and transformed the objectives into a "catchy tag for the class; WRLS is cool, it creates hype, it's like an interesting album title" (Teacher Interview, September 12, 2015).

#WRLS became a frequently used hash-tag for Mr. François as he documented his classroom experiences and student writing on his social media accounts. He celebrated students' strengths and built 'hype' around the content course. A considerable level of artistic agency was required to popularize a potentially confusing English Language Arts and Social Studies 'Humanities' class. On the first day, a student asked, "Mister, what is this class supposed to be?" (Field Notes, August 25, 2015) and another commented, "this is history *and* reading *and* writing?" (Field Notes, August 25, 2015). Thus, Mr. François #WRLS designed a way to generate enthusiasm and pride in the classroom culture to promote the appeal, benefits, and necessities of fluent and flexible reading, writing, and self-expression.

Mr. François encouraged his students to post pictures of their writing, comic books they enjoyed, or art works they liked. He would remind students to index their posts with #WRLS or #getaneducation. Though Mr. François did not connect with his students on Facebook, he did so on Instagram, which consequently resulted in a rather professional account on his part, consisting of almost exclusively #WRLS related posts for a nine-month period.

By the end of the second week of school, the walls of this classroom were covered in student-made posters with student-authored poetry, student-created art, and student-generated lists of writing topics. Mr. François' stated a goal of building healthy writing habits by allowing students to have time to write freely in their notebooks. Hence, he made a priority of this type of writing during four out of the five instructional days. Free

writing in their *writers' notebooks* took high priority both in class and for weekend homework for the first 12 weeks of the school year.

Table 4.3. Teacher's Pre-Study Knowledge, Tool, and Practices

Pre-Study Knowledge	Pre-Study Teaching Tools	Pre-Study Practices
Teacher leveraged his vast knowledge about Hip Hop which shaped the way he managed the classroom and fostered familial connection and engagement Presenting and legitimizing Hip Hop as literature (i.e. using Kendrick Lamar's album *To Pimp a Butterfly* as core text to analyze for identity related themes and tensions) Multimedia and technology (laptop, audio speakers, projector, synthesizer) seamlessly integrated into instruction daily; effective management of classroom technology Positioning students appreciatively as intellectuals and 'value' and 'leverage' their various literacies Culturally relevant instruction as a way to connect with and engage all students	Reading instruction included: • modeling sense-making & practical comprehension strategies through mini-lessons • practicing stamina by allowing students to read texts of their choice for extended periods of time • using current events articles on News ELA to modify level of challenge and language preferences Writing instruction included: • Mini-lessons • Think-Alouds • Quick Writes/Writing to Think • Writer's Notebook as a safe space to collect thoughts and ideas Word wall above the 'dictionary table' (which students used daily) Class set of iPads (used by students weekly) mostly for accessing No Red Ink (online web-based language-learning platform designed to help students in grades 4-12 improve conventional grammar) *Table Groups* as tool to practice dialogic talk and foster collaboration	Teacher-created unit of study focus on *identity,* featured content included: • poems (*Mother to Son*) • novels (*The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*) • short stories (Sugarcane Fire) • current news articles • inspiring videos (themes of grit, & fail fast fail often) Multimodality valued in the daily culture of the classroom**:** Types of products students produced included: poetry, posters, artwork, and 'zines; Reading instruction involved: • weekly class trip to the school library • 'Jigzaw' reading longer length texts • Teaching AVID reading strategies such as CDE (context, dictionary, evidence) • Socratic Seminars Students were held accountable for a writing notebook (90 minutes per week around student's topic of choice in their language of choice)

The Teacher's Curriculum Planning and Designing Approach Leading Up to Designing an Anti-racist Literacy Curriculum

The first curriculum design finding asserts that planning for an anti-racist literacy curriculum was facilitated by a teacher working within as well as outside the official curriculum (in this case, both the English Language Arts content as well as the Texas History content) to establish connections and legitimacy with the official curriculum and his educational agenda of teaching and learning anti-racism (Dei, 1996) and racial literacies (Twine, 2004; Twine & Steinbugler, 2006).

The initial 'big picture plan', which we co-created in August 2015, turned out to be the most essential blueprint Mr. François used to anchor the entire instructional calendar, with new district issued literacy learning goals every six weeks. Mr. François and I designed a general draft of Units 1 through 6, all congruent to the ELA Y.A.G. (see Appendix) and the Social Studies Y.A.G. learning objectives as an initial blue print drafting period as results of the extended planning sessions which took place August 18th and 19th, 2015. During this phase of planning, teaching was already underway. At the beginning of the school year, Mr. François spent much of his instructional time habitually inviting students to write freely about topics and themes that mattered to them, and to build reading habits of mind and endurance in the writing process. By late August of 2015, Mr. François had understood the course he planned to follow for the year's literacy instruction and learning goals up to late December of 2015, and generally, the course of the second half of the school year (January – June of 2016). Units 1 to 2 (September – December 2015) built on the theme of *identity*. Then, starting in January, Units 3 to 6 (January – May 2016) the big idea centered on the theme of *power* (the antiracist literacy curriculum also known as *The Power Unit*). Power as a lens through which students

would respond to literature (Smagorinsky, 2007) was to be introduced in January 2016, literature explored in a series of literacy lessons featuring six main texts.

For Mr. François, designing a literacy curriculum meant figuring out how to best achieve balance, prioritizing culturally and linguistically responsive teaching (Gay, 2010; Hollie, 2017) while sticking to a regimented schedule of unrelenting testing. While a reading and writing workshop model (Kittle, 2008; Kittle, 2013) is what Mr. François aimed to use for his seventh-grade classroom, free-writing and choices for students to read self-selected texts was not a district-level initiative or a campus level priority. According to the local district-level supervisors, the teacher was accountable to any and all other seventh-grade Humanities teachers (again, Humanities in this context refers to a double blocked English Language Arts curriculum coupled with a Social Studies/History curriculum) and could expect support if they adhered to the plan for the year which was colloquially called the *Y.A.G.* or *Year at a Glance*. This is an adaptation of a much longer document that the local school district refers to as subject-area-specific, grade-level *scope and sequence* document. This *scope and sequence* document was intended to provide teachers and administrators with a curriculum and assessment timeline spanning from September 2015 to June of 2016. The district timeline is what Mr. François chose to use as the same basic time frame for his seventh-grade students. Instead of refuting the district timeline, Mr. François approached curriculum planning as understanding that he was responsible to prepare students for district and state assessments in two content areas under the *Humanities* curriculum. He did the work within this *scope and sequence* structure to organize all the other literacy practices, projects, and the anti-racist unit. Mr.

François commented, "You gotta do what you gotta do, which also means you can do what you want to do" (Personal Correspondence, September 20, 2015). Here, we see evidence of how Mr. François acknowledged and agreed to transact with the official curriculum while working toward his goal of incorporating or transforming his classroom curriculum to include teaching and learning antiracist practices and racial literacies (Ohito, 2017; Skerrett, 2011; Twine & Steinbugler, 2006; Twine, 2004).

Before detailing the specifics of the official curriculum or the *scope and sequences* and before expounding on how Mr. François used the many standards in which to build a small antiracist unit, I will first show a snapshot of the teacher prior to the planning process. The *pre-study Mr. François* already carried out and had a vast, pre-existing, mature understanding of variety of texts, as well as a pedagogical toolkit already equipped with thoughtful literacy teaching practices.

Teacher's Pre-study Tools, Knowledge, Identity and Agency

Research question two asked what knowledge, practices and tools were brought to and emerged from designing this antiracist literacy curriculum. Mr. François brought to and used in this work his pre-existing cultural identity, racial literacies knowledge, and his professional identity as a culturally responsive teacher (Gay, 2010) who possessed and employed significant agency in negotiating with the official curriculum to make it more responsive to his students' identities, lived experiences, and interests. From the onset and during our initial conversation over the phone about the possibilities of this research project taking place in his classroom, Mr. François identified as a culturally responsive teacher (Gay, 2010). While I shared thoughts around how *against the grain* teachers

(Cochran-Smith, 1991) are significant change agents for effective teaching and learning in literacy classrooms, we agreed we both still have much to learn about the teacher dispositions, identities, and agency of educators who self-identify as or as wanting to be literacy teachers devoted to the work of social justice (Bomer & Bomer, 2001). By the time of our first meeting to officially discuss his pre-existing curriculum, Mr. François had printed out both the English Language Arts and History district curriculum maps for seventh-grade as well as outlined ideas he had for the school year.

The Teacher's Pre-existing Knowledge, Tools, Pedagogical Practices, and Agency Most Pertinent to Designing an Antiracist Literacy Curriculum

The second question of this study addresses what specific knowledges, tools, and practices were brought to and emerged from designing this anti-racist literacy curriculum. In Table 4.3 above, I presented the broad range of knowledges, tools, and practices Mr. François employed in his teaching. In this section, I focus on those which he ended up drawing upon most heavily in planning the antiracist literacy curriculum. Here, I also add the teacher's agency as it was a significant dimension in the teacher's planning of the antiracist literacy curriculum. Thus, Table 4.4 presents the pre-existing agentic knowledge, tools, and practices Mr. François brought to the work of planning an anti-racist literacy curriculum. The data sources from which I gathered the content within this table included: correspondence with the teacher, planning meetings, teacher interviews, classroom observations, and Mr. François' Hip Hop lyrics.

Table 4.4. Teacher's Pre-existing Knowledge, Tools, Pedagogical Practices, and Agency Related to the Antiracist Literacy Curriculum

Knowledge & Agency	Tools & Agency	Practices & Agency
Racial literacies (Twine & Steinbugler, 2006) include included Double Consciousness, Black Thought (connected to a growing knowledge of Emancipatory Pedagogy), negotiation of local racial meaning, and seeing routine forms of everyday racism	Effective management of classroom technology such iPads and relevant use of online platforms such a Soundcloud, interactive sites such as News ELA	Multimodal instruction featuring music, ads, film, photography, and other forms of visual art as legitimate forms of literature (multimodal teaching as norm, not exception)
Ideology that curriculum ought to be rooted in identity; beginning of the year unit's guiding question for students: "Who am I and what do I have to say?"	*Writer's Notebook* as a space for students to explore their own topics; in tandem with teacher writing alongside the students (sharing and modeling from his own *writer's notebook*)	Presenting and legitimizing *culturally conscious Hip Hop* as literature (as opposed to Hip Hop as a bridge to literature)
Identity as a *Scholar Emcee* in an academic setting: "I am not the loose cannon. I am not the angry Black man. But I am definitely the person who demands that we discuss the white elephant. I'll be saying that stuff that nobody else wants to say, but that everybody's always thinking."	*Writing Heroes* displayed photos and biography summaries as an opportunity to appreciate and learn about students' cultural icons; Culturally responsive instruction (Gay, 2010), *using pop culture*, and honoring student *interests* (effort to connect, desire to support community)	Culturally responsive teaching practices (Gay, 2010) used daily: taking on students' cultural learning styles and tools such as riddles, songs, poems, call and response, etc.
Understanding and valuing the importance of adhering to and balancing campus curricular expectations, with district timelines, as well as state assessments, and national programs being implemented on the middle school campus	*Table Groups* as a way to foster collaboration and encourage students to practice dialogic talk (Mercer, 2003) among themselves and then as a class (not a unique structure, but vastly different from colleagues who chose rows of individual desks)	Teacher consistently appreciated and leveraged his students' language knowledge and language use; Translating popular phrases to conjure humorous language play (i.e. "That's neck" adapted into "That's cuello.")

Pre-existing Teacher Knowledge and Agency. Prior to this study, Mr. François already nurtured a developed sense of self and was employing agency in his personal life, his professional identity as a Hip Hop artist, and in his curriculum and instructional decisions

preceding the design of this anti-racist curriculum. One of the ways Mr. François expressed his agency was by positioning himself as, a term he coined, *Scholar Emcee*, which indexes the counter-culture *Trill Pedagogy* (Harling, 2013; Trill or Not Trill, 2017) notion of education and empowerment through Hip Hop. He reflected that even though he sees himself as an intellectual, his teaching colleagues project a different type of role for him: "My middle school teacher peers wish I would be the disciplinarian teacher, you know, the intimidating Black man" (Planning Meeting, October 3, 2015). While teaching, he commented, "even as a Black man in the American south, there was opportunity in my youth and I went for it. It was me against the world" (Classroom Observation, September 1, 2015). Even with this classic 'you can do it' anthem *2Pac* reference (Shakur, 1995), Mr. François's agency and identity appeared to be rooted in *culturally conscious Hip Hop* (Boyd, 2002; Kitwana, 2002), a distinct form of the genre. The *culturally conscious Hip Hop* included in this seventh-grade literacy classroom curriculum did not feature the violent misogynist discourse often stereotyped in popular media, but rather a type of counter-narration obsessed with cultural knowledge (James, 2004). Mr. François did not choose to use this medium as a way to *reach the kids,* but rather, relied on critical Hip Hop pedagogy as a form of self-reflection and liberatory praxis (Akom, 2009). As discussed earlier with the posters on Mr. François's walls, those he thought he should include and the ones students decided on, all went through a process of analysis of how these artists represented people of color's cultures, experiences, and critical perspectives on oppression of many kinds.

His deep connection to and production of culturally conscious Hip Hop (Boyd, 2002; Kitwana, 2002) transfigured into various areas of his life. In addition to being a seventh-grade teacher, Mr. François is a husband, father of two young children, community mentor, part-time performer, and occupies other roles such as motivational speaker. These identities and parts point to how his own multimodal literacies (Jewitt, 2008) perpetuated his understandings and practices as a literacy teacher and the idea that literacy education can function as a vehicle for social change (Horton & Freire, 1990). *Culturally Conscious Hip Hop* (CCHH) is known for perpetuating an esthetic that is life-affirming and hopeful, while being fiercely critical of mainstream politics. For example, Mr. François has an extensive discography of his own and has been featured on several albums. During the month leading up to the study, the Hip Hop group Third Root featured Mr. François on their album *Libertad* (2017). The following song lyrics, written and performed by Mr. François, exemplify his *scholar emcee* knowledge and agency:

> The revolution won't Dap, or Whip, or Hit the Quan, but it will dance on water, on ceilings, on schedule, on time/The Revolution won't have two left feet/so you think you can dance?/The Revolution won't sit right with the crowd, or synch right to the Cloud, but it will end up with millions of followers/The Revolution will make a sound/The Revolution will rap, but it won't go viral, no it won't go viral.

Appreciating Mr. François's reference to Gil Scott-Heron's legendary spoken-word piece *The Revolution Will Not Be Televised* (1970) requires a complex set of racial literacies (Ohito & Oyler, 2017). Scott-Heron's song title was initially a slogan of the 1960s Black

Power movements in the US and the original lyrics either mention or allude to several TV series, advertising slogans and icons of entertainment and news coverage in a biting social critique of White America. In his lyrics, Mr. François suggests Scott-Heron's strongly pro-Black perspective as he indexes contemporary popular dance fads as a way of critiquing American society's propensity to ignore meaningful movements and interest in being conveniently entertained. Themes of sociopolitical resistance, breakdown of racism and xenophobia, and rejection of political neutrality also permeate in pieces Mr. François has composed and performed.

Mr. François's knowledge and agency was also evident in his self-identification as socially and culturally *woke* (Hess, 2016; Romero, 2016; Steinmetz, 2017). Evoking ones woke-ness, or being *woke* involves introspection and an acute awareness, often manifesting in sociolinguistic ways, of one's own power and privilege, or lack of power and privilege, in society due to the intersectional attributes of their identity (Cherry-McDaniel, 2017). In this understanding, 'privilege' refers to unequal opportunities by virtue of one's identity and subsequent immunity to discrimination (McIntosh, 1989). As a Black man in his early 40's, Mr. François understood and practiced racial literacy and anti-racism in his personal life. His pre-existing knowledge shaped his pedagogical thinking and practices relative to racial literacy.

> I'm here to study in the library, but this person looking at me might think I'm on an athletic scholarship, I don't know. But as soon as they start talking to me, lo and behold, there it is. And I understand why, because I'm able to look through these different literacy lenses all at the same time. So I

> think that's pretty much how it's always worked. For example, today is Black Friday and so my wife, who's been a fan of the Not One Dime Movement, is at Macy's right now with her mom and my mom, and they're all buying stuff, but she's not. So there's that racial literacy once again. The thing for me to do is not to buy anything between Thanksgiving and New Years because it's going to demonstrate economic power. It's a step towards survival and respect and equal footing in this country. And then on the other hand, you have other friends who are like, 'No, that's ridiculous.' So even seeing through racial lenses, you have bi-focal perspectives (Teacher Interview, November 28, 2015).

Evidence of how Mr. François' complex reflection of the double consciousness required in racial literacy (Twine & Steinbugler, 2006) points as well to the second finding of this chapter. This sophisticated pre-existing racial literacy knowledge that Mr. François' brought to the work is one of several different types of knowledge and agency (Lasky, 2005; Lopez, 2011) he contributed to the curriculum design process.

Pre-existing Teaching Tools and Agency. A note-worthy feature of his classroom was the group seating configuration and the attention paid to allowing instructional time for collaboration and discussion among students. Seats were assigned carefully by Mr. François and organized into a cluster of five desks, called *table groups.* During any typical time of instruction, the teacher worked his way between and sat among said table groups, and took turns stopping at each for approximately two minutes at a time to listen to students' conversations, join-in dialogues, and/or ask a question.

Mr. François used these table groups as a tool to foster collaboration, but mostly to support dialogic talk (Mercer, 2003). Interactions between the teacher and students typically known as the initiation-response-feedback (IRF) exchange were minimal. The thoughtful nature of the table groups gave classroom talk a distinctive form that seemed to also reflect a culturally responsive approach (Gay, 2010) to encouraging lively, effective dialogue. The dialogic talk sounded like students regularly making significant contributions and students' thoughts and questions helped evolve and nuance class discussion.

Mr. François also created a *writing heroes* wall that comprised of posters of student-selected performance artists as writers to create a sense of community. Mr. François' appreciation and knowledge of Hip Hop was rather detached from some of the selected artists such as J. Cole and Romeo Santos. In spite of his opinion, he printed and hung high-quality color images of these writing heroes, alongside some of his personal favorites ranging from the contemporary Oddisee to the classic Run DMC. Mr. François explained he did this as a way to connect with the cultural insights and opinions of the students as follows:

> Last summer my idea was to adopt Clint Dempsey as a *writing hero*. Dempsey's from East Texas, and he raps, and he's the Captain American of the U.S. soccer team, and I thought, 'They love soccer, so I can use Clint Dempsey because he's from Texas *and* he's a writer, and they were like, 'Who's that? That ain't Ronaldo!' And I thought, 'Okay, I just I tried something and I learned something.'

> Ronaldo's been on the wall ever since by popular demand, right? As simple as that sounds. And I don't want to essentialize, but I do want to connect. And taking that one step further always does a lot of good. I never thought I'd have Romeo Santos on my wall, didn't even know who that was prior to teaching here, never heard of him. The kids told me, 'He's got a song with Drake!' Well, I wouldn't have known that either, you know? But the literature that we read warns you not to essentialize, and sometimes, essentializing or even stereotyping or just being naïve, asking kind of silly generic questions, kids can read through that and see that your real desire is to connect, and that's what happens (Teacher Interview, November 28, 2015).

The Hip Hop Mr. François brought to instruction touted intellectual, culturally conscious lyrics composed by poets and activists able and willing to embody the cultural wealth and multiple literacies of communities of color. The *writing heroes* wall worked as a way to legitimatize multiple modes of literacy and also build a bridge from the classroom community to the lives of the students' most favored artists.

Pre-existing Knowledge and Practices. The sociocultural definition of agency demands studying distinct action in a way that prioritizes the social contexts and cultural tools that shape the development of a person's beliefs, values, and ways of acting (Lasky, 2005; Wertsch, 1991). Mr. François exercised his confidence, freedom, and independence as he drew upon his unique cultural knowledge bases, tools, and pedagogical practices that

were different from his colleagues. These agentic pre-existing knowledge(s), tools, and practices provided a foundation upon which Mr. François felt safe to proceed with planning for an antiracist curriculum. The knowledge(s), tools, and practices Mr. François brought to the planning process also point to the second design finding, which asserts that teachers develop their own frameworks of racial literacy and ability to design and enact an anti-racist curriculum by drawing on their own existing agency as teachers; and identifying a concept or construct related to antiracism about which they are already knowledgeable. As I observed prior to the start of the study, Mr. François consistently appreciated and leveraged his students' language knowledge and language use. Mr. François also had deeply rooted values in appreciation for and support of multilingualism that reflected a desire for his classroom to be a space for the dynamic bilingualism and Spanglish his students spoke daily. For example, during instruction one day he stopped to encourage the mostly bilingual class, "Do you see your advantage? Don't lose your advantage!" (Field Notes, August 24, 2015). Another time teaching he asked, "Who here is bilingual? Do you realize what a great gift that is?" (Field Notes, September 4, 2015). This pre-existing practice of appreciating and leveraging students' languages included positioning unlikely or hesitant students as knowledgeable, as well as privileging those multilingual and bilingual voices as precious with valuable life-navigation tools and cultural repertoires. Mr. François reflected on this practice in an interview,

> Sometimes, I speak my broken Spanish, which entertains them, and I'm pretty sure they love it. So I try. And I feel like that's part of it, too, is just showing interest in how they talk and how they see things gets me in the

> habit of wanting to know even more about how they look at the world, which gets *them* in the habit of sharing with me and with each other how they perceive stuff, that's all (Teacher Interview, November 28, 2015).

During a discussion we had focused on racial literacy (Ohito, 2017; Skerrett, 2011; Twine, 2004; Twine & Steinbugler, 2006), Mr. François reflected on his students as "inheritors of a complicated world" (Personal Correspondence, August 7, 2015) and identified his legacy as an educator to facilitate students' self-motivations and to then be a teacher who helps connect literacy skills to the growth of their goals.

Mr. François fostered his identity as a first-year graduate student in a large local state university's college of educational leadership master's program, the same university where I was a doctoral student during the time of the study. In an interview he shared that his role as a master's student in the college of education overlapped his role as a literacy teacher in that "being a student at the same time helps me model the beauty of reading and writing and connect it to all layers as lovers of learning" (Teacher Interview, November 2, 2015). The theories and scholarship he analyzed in assigned coursework appeared in some form in his classroom teaching, including theories of educational equity and tensions around equitable pedagogical practice with extensive study of research conducted by Gloria Ladson-Billings and Angela Valenzuela. Through his coursework, he also engaged in reading, discussing, and writing about educational practices introduced in teacher practitioner books such as *Strategies for Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Teaching and Learning* (Hollie, 2015), *The Diversity of*

Schooling: A Cultural-historical Approach (Moll, 2001), and *City Schools and the American Dream: Reclaiming the Promise of Public Education* (Noguera, 2003).

Knowledge, Tools, and Practices that Emerged from the Process of Designing an Antiracist Literacy Curriculum

This section addresses the findings related to the research question regarding the knowledge, tools, and practices that emerged from the process of designing an antiracist literacy curriculum. Mr. François brought a great deal to this planning work including his own racial knowledge and racial literacies that were grounded in his personal and professional life experiences, identities, and agency. From the onset, Mr. François showed self-awareness and an interest in growth around discussing race as a social construct (Mahiri, 2015), racism, and refuting the ideologies of post-racial discourse (Fields & Fields, 2012). In addition to the wobble (Fecho, Graham, & Hudson-Ross, 2005) factor, there was also what Urrieta (2007) refers to as g*anas,* which in the teaching context refers to the desire to raise consciousness and teach for social justice *pero con ganas* (Urrieta, 2007) and in the process give back to communities of color. Both he, as the main researcher participant, and I, as the researcher, stepped into the planning of this anti-racist unit of study with slightly more *ganas* (Urrieta, 2007) or determination, than apprehension.

Our first planning session was around his dining room table August 2015, surrounded by examples of student work and curriculum from his past two years of teaching. We discussed texts and learning activities he had tried before, and he based much of his instructional thinking and talking around literacy curriculum he had practiced

in previous years. By November 2015, after an interview spotlighting questions of racial literacy and exploring the nuances of anti-racist solidarity (DeLissovoy & Brown, 2015), Mr. François joked self-deprecatingly, "Okay I'm finally truly understanding what we're doing here" (Teacher Interview, November 18, 2015). While Mr. François displayed his racial literacy knowledge, he also showed curiosity and engagement with ideas that were newer to him. As another example, during a conversation in the hallway as we walked to the school cafeteria, Mr. François reflected:

> I'm still trying to wrap my head around this whole anti-racism thing. On the one hand, I'm determined to figure out how to do it, but then again, it's tragic that there even is a need for such a thing. But I see the need for sure (Personal Correspondence, December 1, 2015).

His openness in admitting a lack of expertise with the concept of antiracism seems to reveal a *wobble* (Fecho, Graham, & Hudson-Ross, 2005). It also implies an admission that being a Black male does not make him an expert in matters of antiracism or antiracist literacy curriculum design; one does not necessarily need be an expert in racial literacy and anti-racist pedagogy in order to embark on the process of designing such a curriculum. One must, however, grasp the necessity and importance of designing an anti-racist literacy curriculum. What emerged from this planning was a deeper knowledge about antiracism and antiracist curriculum.

Connecting Antiracist Curriculum to the Existing Curriculum

One finding of this design process analysis is that anti-racist curriculum develops by working both outside and within the official curriculum. In December 2015 students

were completing *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* (Alexie, 2007). It appeared that the regular conversations we had been engaged in about anti-racist curriculum enabled Mr. François to begin thinking about some possibilities through which his existing literacy curriculum could be transformed into an explicitly anti-racist one. This is another point of knowledge and understanding that emerged from Mr. François as a consequence of designing an antiracist curriculum. Mr. François, in reflecting on an ending unit, began invoking the term *power*, which would ultimately become the entry-point for the design of an antiracist literacy curriculum, the *Power Unit*.

The pre-planning period leading up to the time when the *Power Unit* was decided upon seemed packed with district assessments. In spite of this, an increasing sense of enthusiasm matured in Mr. François, as he and the students were wrapping up the *Identity Unit* and reading *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part Time Indian* (Alexie, 2007) as a whole class text. Mr. François shared with me in an email correspondence that he had some big concepts he had been thinking through. He wrote:

> So I've been thinking a lot lately about race, and class, and culture, and social justice, and how the novel that we're reading (*The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*) affects us and how it's setting us up as we finish out the year and look ahead into January. Here's what I want the kids to ask, 'How can we as readers and writers create fiction to tell our own stories or the stories of my people and my community?' But to get them there I'm going to first ask, 'What is powerful about fiction writing? What is powerful about *The Absolutely True Diary*? What does it

> communicate?' I think that will get them talking about race, class, culture, and equity. If it doesn't, maybe I can ask them more directly (Teacher Email, November 30, 2015).

Even though the theme of *power* was not yet directly mentioned, Mr. François's desires to have students contemplate 'what is powerful about' a novel emerges. The second finding around this type of planning is this idea that the construct related to anti-racism, which for Mr. François was *power*, and which led to the design of an anti-racist literacy curriculum (the *Power Unit),* grew and evolved over multiple discussions and exchanges.

Part of the pre-planning weeks involved Mr. François and I reviewing a particular transcript together in which we spoke about anti-racist pedagogies. I arranged for this so that we could notice language that was outstanding to him that he might draw upon in designing and planning the antiracist literacy unit. More generally, this reviewing of transcripts was also a way for me to member-check and clarify questions. With asking him to review a particular antiracist curriculum interview, I hoped it would help foster deeper discussion about our process. When I invited Mr. François to specifically reflect on a shift in talk I noticed from tolerance as the construct to power as the construct, he noted, "birth of the power unit" in the margins of an interview transcript where he spoke of curriculum and the literacy skills:

> **Mr. François:** We're supposed to be co-planning a unit. And it seems like it should be somewhere between here (pointing to the November 2015 part of the calendar) and February (2016). It *seems* like, if you go back to last year, when we were emailing, it seems like this was the one, this one right

here. I remember when we got pretty fired up and I sent some Selma stuff…

Me: *The Sneetches* and Barbara Jordan and the power of persuasion.

Mr. François: That's all the same flow.

Me: Yeah, so let's talk.

Mr. François: (reading aloud from an email exchange with me) Teaching strength in tolerance…Barbara Jordan's point of her speech is *tolerance*, and *The Sneetches* sets that up.

(Teacher Interview, November 29, 2015)

As he and I discussed back in November 2015, the overarching theme of the anti-racist unit, the *Power Unit*, was to be *tolerance*. However, approximately one month later, Mr. François re-vised the overarching theme to be *power,* or, more specifically, the *power of youth*. By the first week of December 2015, we sat down to plan the anti-racist unit, and by that point, his *power* concept had matured. He shared:

> So here we are, thinking again about race, and class, and culture, and color, and community. Pretty soon I can introduce that *Power of Illusion* conversation, then, and then, aha, society, and then equity, and then social justice, and *then* The Children's March, which brings in the power of children. Then we bring in *Selma*, which, for lack of a better description, shows the power of diversity (Curriculum Planning, December 8, 2015).

A rather natural development of ideas grew as Mr. François applied his racial literacy knowledge into his curricular design process. The *Power of Illusion* conversation he

referred to indexes a series (originally aired on Public Broadcasting Series) he watched per my recommendation. The full title is *Race: The Power of Illusion* (California Newsreel, 2003), a three-part documentary television series that investigates the idea of race in society, science, and history). During an earlier part of the same conversation, Mr. François reflected on connecting the concept of power:

> On the one hand, I'm trying to establish that equality makes sense, so we have to talk about race, culture, and community first. Is that what you were thinking too? On the other hand, I'm also rolling in the power of young people to prove a point and even change policy. Which, to me, is always the main thing (Curriculum Planning, December 8, 2015).

In addition to Mr. François' attention to nuancing terminology and clarifying his curricular goals, there exists a type of invitation to dialogue in this example. This leads me to address the third finding in this chapter, which concerns the nature of the process behind planning this type of antiracist literacy curriculum.

Reflection and Deliberation Around Curriculum Texts, Topics, and Themes

The third design finding of this chapter shows that teachers need time for reflection, deliberation, and revision around curriculum texts, topics, and themes to plan a robust anti-racist curriculum. In this case, a recursive and extensive process of co-planning conversations were essential to the design of an anti-racist curriculum, as deliberations over curricular texts, pedagogical practices, and anti-racist theory and research required collaborative and individual reflections with a peer-researcher. As Mr. François mentioned above, the practice of co-planning was a critical element of designing

the antiracist curriculum. A strategic span of time for reflection and deliberation around curriculum texts, topics and themes that teachers can employ in developing an anti-racist curriculum was significant for Mr. François. This teacher sought out multiple opportunities to refine and time to reflect upon, re-vise and let alone an explicitly antiracist (Dei, 1996, 2000, 2006) curriculum, and re-focus the unit of study. This process of deliberation and reflection appeared to deepen the attention on antiracist content and antiracism as a tool for teaching racial literacy. I calculated an average of two hours a week, or approximately ten hours a month as beneficial for this type of design. I am only including the time for our talks together in this estimation; this does not include his own time for reflection and deliberation. Mr. François appeared to prioritize these long planning sessions with remarks such as, "if we're planning for more impact, I got all the time in the world" (Personal Correspondence, December 2, 2015).

The kinds of conversations Mr. François and I had about beginning to plan for this work ranged from the critical race theories to the power of literacy to more practical literacy instruction. These conversations provided further evidence of how Mr. François planned for this antiracist unit to fit within the official curriculum unit and his existing values, tools, and practices as a literacy teacher. Related to maintaining his existing focus on students valuing their linguistic flexibility and multilingualism, he seemed excited about using bilingual instructional resources such as *News ELA* in the Power Unit, yet expressed concern about "teaching my bilingual students well enough" (Mr. François, planning session, September 2, 2015). News ELA was a particularly helpful resource as it functions a database of current events stories tailor-made for classroom use. Indexed by

broad themes (e.g. War and Peace, Arts, Science, Health, Law, Money, etc.), non-fiction pieces are both student-friendly and can be accessed in different formats by reading level.

The Researcher's Role(s) and Responsibilities in Planning

As I described in the methodology chapter, although my role in aiding in the design of this anti-racist literacy curriculum required a multifarious process (as research, but also as a mentor and a thought-partner), it was also rooted in the pragmatic straightforwardness of the *coaching with CARE* paradigm (Wetzel, Hoffman, & Maloch, 2017). This design process entailed more than frequent and multiple opportunities for planning, it required devoted attention to function as Mr. François's sounding board as he pondered and mapped out his teaching. The main components of the CARE model entail critical thinking, appreciative stances, reflection, and experiential learning (Wetzel et al., 2017). My aim was to encourage him to critically examine the influences of authority in his context; to support him to continue taking appreciative stances toward colleagues, administrators, students, and curriculum decisions; to urge reflection on his teaching practices as a process of analysis and synthesis toward insight and change; and to base everything we spoke about in his experience in that authentic classroom context (Wetzel et al., 2017). Typically, Mr. François would share literacy learning goals and instructional ideas with me, and then ask for my feedback. My perceived responsibilities encompassed using a variety of cognitive coaching skills, capabilities, and mental maps (Costa & Garmston, 2015) including trying to appreciate aspects of his thinking without making value judgments. I most often withheld advice or recommendations and instead asked

what he thought ought to be done and posed questions with the intention of engaging and transforming his thinking (Costa & Garmston, 2015).

When appropriate, and almost always in tandem with other literacy learning goals, I intentionally used three terms repeatedly in our conversations, our planning, as well as in our casual encounters: *racial literacy* (Sealey-Ruiz & Greene, 2015; Skerrett, 2011), *antiracism* (Dei, 1996, 2000, 2006), and *antiracist solidarity* (De Lissovoy & Brown, 2013). While the official curricula provided a *selective inclusion* (Behdad, 1993) of histories of people of color, much of our time was spent 'adding to' resources. Since an antiracist paradigm pushes towards a redefinition of power structures and the rupturing of asymmetric relations of domination and power in society, Mr. François reflected on extending himself to not add to the limited texts, "I feel like I'm extending beyond just my usual multi-cultural jams. This is going to be some intense *fight the good fight* teaching" (Personal Correspondence, December 15, 2015). I also served as a key resource for Mr. François in leading him to websites such as *NewsELA* and other places where he could locate and select from texts that might facilitate teaching and learning in the antiracist curriculum. I also suggested instructional ideas, texts, and learning activities for this unit and Mr. François integrated some of these resources that he self-selected into parts of his existing practices as well as those he generated himself, or that we co-generated through collaborative talk and work.

Anti-racist Literacy Curriculum Planning Facilitated by Teacher Working *Within and Outside* the Official Curriculum to Establish Connections and Legitimacy: The Process of Designing the *Power Unit*

Here I turn to address the nature and process of the curriculum planning between Mr. François and I as we discussed various texts, instructional ideas, learning activities, things to teach about, how the anti-racist unit was going to connect to the official curriculum, the duration of the unit, the timeline, and how to design this curriculum while still following the district's timeline of curriculum events like testing. In order for the anti-racist curriculum to be implemented, some of its content and structure/organization, as well as its timeline needed to work *outside yet within* the official curriculum (first design finding). In what follows I describe a variety of types of conversations and discussions through which the design of the antiracist literacy curriculum emerged. Across all of these conversations, the finding of how the teacher worked both within and outside the official curriculum to design his antiracist curriculum will be discussed.

Conversations about Official Curriculum Texts and Antiracism

In one of our first conversations, Mr. François and I discussed the scarcity of Frederick Douglass's legacy being taught in schools. Though *The Narrative of the Life of a Slave* was available as an option in the school library storage closet, Douglass's antiracist stance is not typically reflected upon nor is it a topic of common or official knowledge presented in any of the middle school English Language Arts or History textbooks. Douglass was known for his arguments against discrimination in pay and duties, and urged retaliation against Confederates murdering, torturing, and enslaving Black prisoners of war, yet this narrative was missing from both the English or the Texas History textbooks. Mr. François confirmed that this racial knowledge was also not presented as official district curriculum assessments and he viewed this absence as

problematic: “Meanwhile, the mainstream, whitewashed curriculum does not *go there*, which presents itself as a challenge when you believe literacy is power.” (Conversation, September 6, 2015).

Conversations around Shared Texts with Antiracist Themes

One of the several things included as part of the process of planning the curriculum was discussions around shared text as well as printed-out transcripts of conversations between us. As I indicated earlier, as part of the overall process, Mr. François and I did talk in an extensively collaborative manner. The way we discussed texts and themes generally overlapped in and out of conversations about teaching and learning during our bi-weekly after school chats on the two days a week while I collected data for the nine months I spent in the classroom.

In addition to printed transcripts of our conversations, the texts we shared, read, and discussed included 1) *Courageous Conversations About Race* (Singleton, 2005), a book that Mr. François was asked to read for one of his introductory master’s level courses, 2) *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* (Alexander, 2010), the anchor text for a book club we volunteered to join together, 3) *Race, The Power of Illusion* (California Newsreel, 2003), a documentary we were recommended, 4) a theoretical article recommended to me titled *Antiracist solidarity in critical education: Contemporary problems and possibilities* (De Lissovoy & Brown, 2013), and 5) curriculum documents provided by the state and by the district pertaining to official English Language Arts curriculum standards. There were various positive consequences of our talk around shared text, namely, this process facilitated negotiation

of overarching concepts related to anti-racism and allowed us chances to develop a common discourse with which to further discuss and plan. For example, while passing a copy of *Courageous Conversations About Race* (Singleton, 2005) back and forth, we were both fascinated by a section titled *White Talk Versus Color Commentary* in a chapter titled *Fourth Condition: Keeping Us All at the Table.* Singleton argued that racial discourse in the United States is governed by cultural parameters of the dominant and mainstream white population. He then explains how a team of researchers analyzed interracial dyads and larger teams of educators attempting to conduct meaningful discourse about racial matters, and claimed that there existed predictable patterns in conversation. As a result, the team identified eight characteristics that describe the nature of communication around race related conversations, and labeled these patterns *White Talk* and *Color Commentary*, each of which is described in elaborate detail. For the sake of this illustration, I focused on a part that Mr. François highlighted in yellow and took notes around

> *"White Talk*, is verbal, impersonal, intellectual*,* and task oriented*. Color Commentary* is nonverbal*,* personal, emotional*,* and process oriented."
>
> (Singleton, 2005, p. 121)

Mr. François, having notated (in marginalia text) while reading an assigned reading, then lent the book to me to read the sections he had also read. I noticed that next to the section that read, "In contrast, people of color initially tend to communicate in the interracial forum in a more cautious and tempered manner," Mr. François noted, "This is true for me; it's all or nothing" "But still, culture is bigger, not accurate to generalize based on a

random racialization". These types of notes and exchanges helped me get a better sense of how to push discussions further, and in turn provided Mr. François particularly with a deeper understanding of my racial literacy knowledge. The shared readings also appeared to expand and deepen Mr. François already multilayered existing racial literacy knowledge and practices.

Discussing Instructional Ideas

The instruction related conversations during the planning of the unit consisted of genre-based discourse, such as teaching persuasive writing, expository writing, and modeling the critical reading of informational texts. These discussions most heavily foregrounded the finding about working within as well as outside the official curriculum in designing and teaching an anti-racist curriculum. Also, reflecting the idea of teaching an anti-racist curriculum while attending to the official curriculum, teaching and practicing the difference between *main idea* and *summarization* for testing purposes, was the teacher's way to "give to Caesar what is Caesar's" (Conversation, September 6, 2015). For instance, Mr. François sought to provide students multiple and relevant ways to connect themes across texts:

> I still want to give them that experience of a true expository essay around the novel versus those newspaper articles. Maybe I need to just simplify that. Maybe I could just break it down real simple. Maybe it could just be sort of like an essay question that you use sentence stems to answer. But I feel like it would be valuable for them to connect on their own; the novel to those newspaper articles, and be able to explain what the newspaper

> articles have in common with the novel. There's a theme of this in the novel and it connects to this because of this (Curriculum Planning conversation, December 15, 2015).

On a regular basis, as I have mentioned, besides various writing and reading genres he was expected to 'cover', the teacher focused on communicating the listening and speaking skills aspect of what this curriculum might entail. At the same time, the nature of talk around these ideas was connected to the district's timeline.

Discussing what one ought to teach. As we planned for this anti-racist curriculum, there were a variety of literacy skills Mr. François felt responsible to 'cover' (*outside yet within*). Yet when it came to addressing the complex practices involved in racial literacy and teaching concepts of anti-racism, Mr. François expressed confidence in the students' strengths,

> I don't need to teach them what white supremacy is, they know it, they experience it; I'm just going to help them put a name on it and argue against it. I also don't need to teach them racial literacy, they already have that; I want to teach them how to claim and harness those precious racial literacy power by sharing stories of how other kids did hard things throughout history. But, I've also just told the kids point blank that I'm trying to set them up to collaborate better (Conversation, December 8, 2015).

The nature of this thinking reflects the teacher's appreciation of his students' racial literacy as a type of power. When it comes to deciding what ought to be taught, there

often exist multiple and complex ideologies that come into play. In the case of this teacher in particular, the fact that his planning-talk returns to *collaboration* also shows the prevalence of the official curriculum's influence on the design process.

Discussing learning activities. Our discussions of learning activities varied both in terms of the type of text or concept Mr. François planned on teaching. He wanted to and planned on starting the *Power Unit* by "doing the race talk facilitation" (curriculum planning conversation, December 8, 2015). He outlined that this *race talk* would be a classroom discussion where his goal was to expose students to particular terms, trouble the assumptions around those terms, and then allow the students to discuss and re-define those concepts. He reflected:

> Another thing I've been thinking about in this conversation is, and it's cool, because they've been defining words like justice while we read *Part Time Indian*. But you know, the word society, the term social justice, the word race, and the word racism, which I know they'll be working on all that very soon. Defining and re-defining words like social justice, equity, it's bound to be an interesting dialogue [pause] or it might completely shut down all the same, you never know. But, hopefully not (Curriculum Planning, December 8, 2015).

When Mr. François indicated he wanted to have the 'race talk' with students, he was conceptualizing a learning activity with the goal of sense-making and establishing a common language around "race, culture, and community" (Mr. François, November 28, 2015). Other learning activities Mr. François and I planned for and discussed included

student discussions that lead to writing around anti-racist issues, writing craft mini-lessons, read-alouds around issues of racial literacy, guided reading sessions, Socratic Seminars on connected topics, conversations with guest speakers, and Family Dialogue Journals (Kay, Neher, & Lush, 2010). Mr. François reflected that he planned to get "super creative" during the "hardest part" or the later half of the *Power Unit,* during which time mandated state-wide testing would interrupt the regular flow of instruction. He explained, "I'll bring back *Mother to Son*, but pair it with *If We Must Die*. Or you know, I'll start rolling out Oddisee videos and pair those with Shel Silverstein poems and get the kids to think." (Mr. François, Curriculum Planning, December 8, 2015).

Discussing the District's Timeline

The conversations around planning this anti-racist literacy unit, as with any other unit, were shaped by the calendar of testing that the state and district set forth. All of our planning conversations began and ended with talk that reflected the district's timeline, which reflects the significance of the first finding: the teacher's outside of the box antiracist curriculum thinking had to fit inside the box of state and district literacy learning standards. For example, the following dialogue spotlights this district-calendar based language:

Teacher: Yep, we have Benchmarks (district testing) the whole last week of January. So, what is that, from the...

Researcher: The 25th, which is a Monday, right?

Teacher: Yes, so that is an entire week. But the good news is persuasive writing continues through February 19th.

Researcher: So how much time is that for *Selma*?

Teacher: Eight days of *Selma*, then two days of CFA's (district assessments).

(Curriculum Planning, December 8, 2015)

For extended sections of time, the transcripts analyzed reveal similar types of calendar-centered district-timeline oriented conversation where we literally counted instructional days around state and district testing. On the other hand, there were also more esoteric points of talk around the planning of this unit, such as discussion around what Mr. François believed he should be teaching.

Outside Yet Within: Teaching Outside the Box, While Inside the Standards

Here I delve deeper into this phenomenon of needed to connect the antiracist literacy curriculum to the official curriculum. This *outside yet within* matter that Fecho, Falter, and Hong (2016) articulated in such helpful ways as they explored dialogical teaching, is the first and perhaps most salient finding of this study. The teacher worked within yet outside of the official curriculum to establish connections and legitimacy with that official curriculum as well as his educational agenda of teaching and learning anti-racism and racial literacies facilitated designing this curriculum.

The Standards at a Glance and How the Antiracist Curriculum Fit

Earlier in the chapter, I presented some of the basic district curriculum and other artifacts that illustrated its conceptualization of literacy teaching and learning according to conventional ideas of reading, writing, listening and speaking skills. Here, I return to a discussion of this official curriculum in order to shed light on how it created openings as well as foreclosures for antiracist literacy curriculum or teaching racial literacies; as well as how Mr. François understood and negotiated with the official curriculum as he prepared himself to design such a curriculum.

The state-district-campus-issued standards that the Contender Middle School English language arts coaches distributed to all the sixth, seventh, and eighth grade teacher was called the *Year at a Glance Scope and Sequence*. These standards almost exclusively constructed the parameters of curriculum design or ideas. There seemed little choice but to stay within the standards, as that official knowledge (Apple, 1993), as well as the *Social Studies Scope and Sequence* (see Appendix A) was accompanied by

standardized tests. For Mr. François, it paved the roadmap for what he would be teaching and what his students would be learning. Yet as described earlier, Mr. François had developed agentive practices of attending to the official curriculum while teaching literacy in ways that he knew would best serve his students. The following table (Table 4.5) reflects an adaptation by Mr. François. The orange portion indicates when the concentration of most productive planning conversations occurred for the *Power Unit*. The purple portion indicates the actual start of the *Power Unit*.

Table 4.5. English Language Arts Year at a Glance Overview

Adapted 7th Grade ELA YAG Overview 2015 – 2016

Timeframe Theme & Genre (Provided by the district)	**Guiding Questions** (Added by the teacher)	**Instruction & Learning Tasks** (Provided by the district)	**Process & Product** (Added by the teacher)
Unit 1 ***(5 weeks, Aug. 31 – Sept 30th)*** **Genre:** ***Literary Non-Fiction & Poetry*** **Theme: Identity**	Why is speaking up important (how are my words interpreted or expressed)? Why does poetry and personal essay matter? How does poetry work as a tool for change? How does personal narrative help bring about change? How can I/we create our own versions of history? How can we use poetry/personal essays to re-create history? How can we use poetry/personal essays to build on my/our own cultural knowledge? How can I build on my own language knowledge as a reader/writer? Who writes history? If you don't write your own story, who will? "It's no use of talking unless people understand what you say." -- Zora Neale Hurston	Students practice generating authentic writing topics and write freely develop ideas in on topics relevant to them Use student writing to identify challenging words (i.e. their, there, they're and other typically misused homonyms & homophones Students should be able to describe how people from various racial, ethnic, and religious groups attempt to maintain their cultural heritage while adapting to larger state-wide culture	Students make and display 'identity' posters throughout the room, these are interactive and student-made (each poster has a question such as 'Who am I?' 'What do I love?' 'Where am I from?' 'What are my hopes?' under which about 60 post-it notes filled with student-generated lists specific to his/her own experiences Students draft a poem inspired by 'Mother to Son' by Langston Hughes Word-wall terms added and discussed: identity, habitual, culture, counter-story, racial, ethnic, religious, and heritage
Unit 2 ***(5.5 weeks, October 5th – November 11th)*** ***Genre: Fiction & Drama*** ***Theme: Identity***	Guiding Questions (Added by teacher) How is the importance of speaking up (interpreting and expressing) changing? If you could turn your Personal Narrative into a fictional adaptation, what would be different? How does fiction & drama affect	**Instructional Goals** (Provided by the district) Compare places and regions of state in terms of physical and human characteristics; Identify how the state Constitution reflects the principles of limited government, republicanism, checks and balances,	**Process & Product** (Added by the teacher) Region Foldable – mnemonic study-aid Word-wall terms added and discussed: heritage, imply, infer, fiction, drama, plot, diagram, setting, character, theme, conflict, internal, external, resolution,

Table 4.5 continued

	us? How can I create fiction/drama to tell my own story or the story of my people/community? What is appealing about fiction/drama? What is communicated through fiction/drama? What is real about fiction/drama?	federalism, separation of powers, popular sovereignty, and individual rights; Compare the principles and concepts of the state Constitution to the US Constitution, including the state and US Bill of Rights; Identify the major eras in state history; Identify important individuals, events and issues related to European colonialism	exposition, rising action, falling action, climax, response, stage directions Student write ending in same point of view, same characterization as The Elevator (short story by William Sleater) **(Provided by the district)** District-issued multiple-choice & short answer essay assessments in English Language Arts District-issued multiple-choice & short answer essay assessments in Social Studies (state history)
Unit 3 ***(5.5 weeks, November 16th – January 15th)*** ***Genre: Informational Text & Expository Essays*** ***Theme: Identity***	Guiding Questions (Added by the teacher) *Why is speaking up important (words - interpreted or express)? Selma unit; What is the value of teamwork? Why is collaboration important? What is the power of diversity? How does working alongside others help bring justice to our community? our country? Are children powerful enough to change our society/world? If so, how? How does informational text relate to power in society? What is power? Who has power and why?*	**Instructional Goals** **(Provided by the district)** Main Idea; summarization; synthesis; critical thinking; persuasive texts. Read and discuss *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part Time Indian* (Alexie, 2007). Identify examples of Spanish influence and the influence of other cultures on the state.	**Process & Product** **(Added by the teacher)** Student create posters featuring themes in *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part Time Indian* Students discuss and create personal narratives in response to Fail Fast, Fail Often, anchor charts around Miniature Earth and Grit Presentation. **(Provided by the district)** District-issued multiple-choice & short answer essay assessments in English language arts. District-issued multiple-choice & short answer essay assessments in Social Studies (state history)

Table 4.5 continued

Unit 4 ***(4 weeks, Jan. 19th – Feb. 19th)*** ***Genre: Persuasive Texts, Media & Expository Essays*** ***Theme: Power***	***Guiding Questions*** **(Added by teacher)** *What persuades you? What do you think people need to be persuaded about? How does media use the art of persuasion to get your attention? Why is understanding the art of persuasion important to you/your community? How can you use persuasive texts to make a difference with issues you care about? How can you make your argument more powerful? What is tolerance? Why is tolerance important? What is power? Who has power and why?*	**Instructional Goals** **(Provided by the district)** Identify and be able to use the following terms to reflect on our writing: persuasion, rhetorical appeal, logos, pathos, ethos. **(Added by the teacher)** Identify important events and issues related to European colonization and the impact of Jim Crow policies in the US South. Identify & discuss events & issues directly connected to white supremacist hate groups. Identify & discuss issues around and outcomes of systemic institutionalized racism.	**Process & Product** **(Added by the teacher)** Students create and display questions in response to the film *Selma* (2014) and the documentary *The Children's March* (2004). Students write and share expository essays in response to Barbara Jordan's "All In Together Now"; Dr. Seuss's Sneetches, and persuasive essays What We Can Learn from Child Refugees Diversity in Children's Stories. **(Provided by the district)** District-issued multiple-choice & short answer essay assessments in English language arts. District-issued multiple-choice & short answer essay assessments in Social Studies (state history).
Unit 5 ***(4 weeks, February 22nd – March 11th)*** ***Genre: TESTing*** Social Studies TEST March 28; Writing TEST: March 29; Reading TEST: May 10 ***Theme: Power***	Guiding Questions (Added by the teacher) *What is your experience with testing? What do you like/dislike about testing? What would you change about the testing process? Who writes the tests and why? How does testing impact your (school and / or neighborhood) community?*	**Instructional Goals** **(Provided by the district)** Practicing testing strategies with students	**Process & Product** **(Provided by the district)** State-issued multiple-choice & short answer essay assessments in English Language Arts State-issued multiple-choice & short answer essay assessments in Social Studies (state history)

Table 4.5 continued

Unit 6 ***(3.5 weeks, April 11th – May 25th)*** ***Genre: Research*** ***Theme: Power***	Guiding Questions **(Added by the teacher)** *How can your 'zines (interactive student-made magazines) be a reflection of who you are (or at least a part of your identity)? What are you most passionate about? Who is your audience, what do you have to say, and how will you say it? How do you figure out what tools/resources you have and which are best? How can you use the tools/resources of research to say what you want to say more effectively? How have you changed and how are you changing? Why is continuing to change important?*	**Instructional Goals** **(Added by the teacher)** Presenting research as a way of inquiring around our desires & dreams. Using hand-made 'zines (interactive magazines) as a form of persuasion, inquiry, and/or self-expression.	**Process & Product** **(Provided by the district)** End of Year district-issued multiple-choice & short answer essay assessments in English language arts. End of the Year district-issued multiple-choice & short answer essay assessments in Social Studies (state history).

Mr. François, as an act of working both within yet outside the official curriculum to establish connections and legitimacy with the official curriculum and his educational agenda of teaching and learning antiracism and racial literacies, similarly conceptualized the *Power Unit* (the first design finding). Mr. François composed general skills focused literacy learning goals to correspond to the state-level content standards, and curricular expectations. He shared that document and related resources with me using the features of Google Docs (which was ongoing throughout the design and implementation of the *Power Unit*).

As we continued co-designing the power unit, in a four-hour-long extended morning planning session (December 15, 2015), Mr. François adapted and wrote down 1)

the big ideas he knew he wanted to explore with students; and 2) the guiding questions, both generated mostly by Mr. François, who dutifully 'conformed yet resisted' (Dei, 1996) the district-issued school-year-long curriculum roadmap.

The Significance of a Teacher's Planning around a Familiar Construct Pertaining to Racism to Enhance Antiracist Literacy Curriculum Design

Thus far I have presented a variety of forms of knowledge, tools, and practices that were developed or expanded by Mr. François through the design process of an antiracist literacy curriculum. In sum, there appeared to be several types of racial literacy knowledge(s), practices, and tools that emerged from his engagement in designing the antiracist curriculum. As mentioned earlier, the readings we shared expanded and deepened Mr. François already existing racial literacy knowledge and practices. Through this reading, Mr. François enhanced his ability to teach students how to recognize and discuss themes around power in both historic and contemporary contexts, plan for racial literacy discussions in terms of counter-narrating histories, and include the use of specific antiracist terms. Some of Mr. François' new tools resulting from the planning processes included finding speakers to lead writing workshop time with students and scheduling curriculum-planning time as a space to 'unpack disenfranchisement.' Mr. François' pedagogical practices eventually designed for facilitating classroom discussions regarding racism; Mr. François' purposed to teach themes of hope, with the use of relevant hash-tags; and finally, he planned for teaching students how to read about and discuss cases of power in responding to anti-Black as well as anti-immigrant, homophobic, sexist policies and cases of local police brutality.

Here, I turn to discuss the second finding. The significance of teacher's being able to draw upon their own racial knowledge and racial literacies to find an entry point into antiracist curriculum design. The depth and momentum that the design process took up, once Mr. François identified the theme of power around which to design the unit, led to this significant understanding. By identifying a concept or overarching construct, power, that fit within his own understandings of antiracism pedagogy from which to teach, Mr. François reinforced this antiracist literacy curriculum design process. Already having his own deep understandings of *power*, Mr. François was able to link this knowledge to his developing understanding of the framework of racial literacy. For example, through our shared readings and his continuous planning and reflection on how this curriculum might take shape to support his curriculum planning for racial literacy.

By late December 2015, we set aside a four-hour period of time, which we split into two separate two-hour long curriculum-planning sessions. These curriculum planning sessions focused primarily on 1) following all the relevant content-area scope and sequence documents (see Appendix), 2) continuing WRLS skills focused language and literacy instruction, and 3) designing a curriculum that was specifically antiracist. During a pre-planning meeting on December 8, 2015, the following discussion took place:

Researcher: You agree we should design your literacy curriculum addressing issues of racism?

Mr. François: I sure do. How about addressing racism through the lens of power? That's what I've been thinking about.

Researcher: Power as in the power to change? Like soul-force power or the power of tolerance? Is that where that came from?

Mr. François: Power has been on my mind since my first year of teaching, and it seems connected to soul-force and tolerance and to everything.

We continued talking as shown above until I wrote down the word *power* on the white board. Mr. François reflected that the concept of power had been occupying his thoughts and that "*power* just seems connected to everything" (Mr. François, December 8, 2015). This seemed appropriate, as that entire week, he had been wrapping up reading and discussing Sherman Alexie's (2007) *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part Time Indian* with his students. As I mentioned earlier, Mr. François identified and used the concept of power, because it was already a theme apparent and reoccurring in his teaching. Again, the second design finding asserts that this teacher developed his own frameworks of racial literacy and ability to design and enact an anti-racist curriculum by drawing on his existing personal, political, and professional knowledge, identity and agency as teachers. This finding suggests that when teachers identify a concept or construct related to anti-racism that they are already knowledgeable about, they then may leverage their identities and knowledge related to anti-racism to support antiracist curriculum planning and teaching. For this teacher, that concept was *power*, resulting in the design of the *Power Unit*.

It was during this curriculum planning session that Mr. François recalled he had originally intended to introduce the theme of *power* to the students as a lens with which to critique the world, saying, "Once they get confident looking at things we read and

write and discuss in this class through the lens of power, maybe they'll start finding the issues of power in other parts of their lives too" (Planning Conversation, December 8, 2015). This theme positioned him as the instructor to give more instructional time to discussing and analyzing specifically Black and Latino counter-narratives during class time. The broad nature of asking 'who has power and how is that power used' carries with it a pedagogical appeal, as it can be applied to almost any historic and contemporary context and/or content knowledge. In this case, it seems possible that using power as a theme in an anti-racist literacy curriculum can lead to in-class discussions that attend to the causes and nuances of not just disrupting white supremacy, but also disrupting homophobia, ableism, and other often intersecting forms of oppression (Blackburn & Smith, 2010; Yosso, 2005; Yuval-Davis, 2006). I will discuss how out-of-class discussions attended to those same causes in the following chapter. Intersectionality (Cho, Crenshaw, McCall, 2013) could also prove a related overarching concept connected to antiracist teaching and learning. Moving beyond the LGBTQ-themed literature and interrogating the social construct of *heteronormativity*, for example, might be another possible path to designing this type of literacy curriculum (Blackburn & Smith, 2010). The broad implication is that all teachers seeking to take antiracist approaches to teaching can find powerful social constructs and associated injustices from which to design their curricula.

Table 4.6 highlights the knowledge, tools, and practices that were strengthened as a result of designing an antiracist literacy curriculum. While these emergent knowledge,

tools, and practices reflected pre-existing ones, several were new, while others were modified.

Table 4.6. Shifts in teacher's knowledge, tools, and practices connected to antiracist literacy curriculum planning.

Shifts in Knowledge	***Shifts in Tools***	***Shifts in Practice***
Racial literacy discussed in terms of counter-narrating #truth histories; including use of specific anti-racist terms such as *white supremacy, KKK, terrorism, etc.* Critically reading multiple news sources and responding to issues (including institutionalized racism and violence against POC) in the nation Recognize and discuss themes around power in civil rights movement and power struggles in current contexts Curriculum planning time as a space to design chances to 'unpack disenfranchisement' Themes in literacy learning goals reflect hope, the importance of education, reading as a source of power, and the significance of *Trill Pedagogy*	Guest speakers, each multilingual POC, leading writing workshop lessons with students Multimodal texts (including film, music, poetry, etc.) spotlighting themes of power and resistance to racism Text narratives more realistically represent complex and humanized protagonist of color with textured lived experiences Texts which reflect multilingual characters and an analysis of racism connected to language use Various current events stories of racism and other forms of oppression presented alongside historic instances of racism	Facilitating discussions about identity, race, *racecraft*, racism Read about and discuss cases of power in responding to anti-Black policies Inviting students to generate questions to navigate a complicated, racist, sexist, etc. text for a better understanding of the world, the U.S., local state level Regularly affirm students' heritage language as powerful and necessary, not just in talk, but also in academic writing Efficient one-on-one writing conferences in which students are encouraged to discuss ideas of power and racism in each other's writing Culturally sustaining literacy instruction (Bomer, 2017) in terms of whole class text choice, independent reading priorities, study strategies, community audiences, and valuing language flexibility

On account of Mr. François antiracist curriculum planning, some instances of certain knowledge reflect pre-existing ones, such as positioning students appreciatively as

intellectuals who value and leverage their literate lives and reading and writing for pleasure and for personal reasons, remained an honored habit. As illustrations of certain tools that echo pre-existing ones, the writer's notebook was sustained and honored as a safe space for students to collect their thoughts. That being said, some examples of knowledge appear modified, such as 1) using culturally sustaining literacy as a way of reading current events and news (as opposed to just culturally relevant ways of reading and writing); 2) reading and analyzing various news sources – current events coupled with Texas history tales (the addition of state history content aided this); 3) multimodality was still valued in the daily culture of the classroom as the teacher planned, but the teacher-designed questions shifted the focus and goals from student-engagement to engaging with and learning racial literacy content.

Not surprisingly, as part of the process of planning the *Power Unit*, new knowledge emerged for Mr. François *in terms of his teaching*, though he knew and applied some of this racial literacy knowledge in other areas of his life. New learning for Mr. Francois in relation to his teaching included him 1) recognizing and discussing themes around power in civil rights movement and power struggles in contemporary contexts; 2) planning for racial literacy discussions in terms of counter-narrating histories; and 3) including the definition and use of specific antiracist terms such as *white supremacy, Nazi, terrorism, and lynching.* Some of Mr. François's new tools as a result of the planning processes included 4) inviting guest speakers to lead brief writing workshops and 5) scheduling and honoring curriculum planning time as a space to design chances to 'unpack disenfranchisement'. The teacher's new pedagogical practices

embraced 6) facilitating discussions about race and racism; 7) teaching themes that would reflect a pedagogy of hope, with the use of relevant hash-tags, and finally 8) reading about and discussing cases of power in responding to anti-Black (as well as anti-immigrant, homophobic, sexist. etc.) policies and cases of local police brutality.

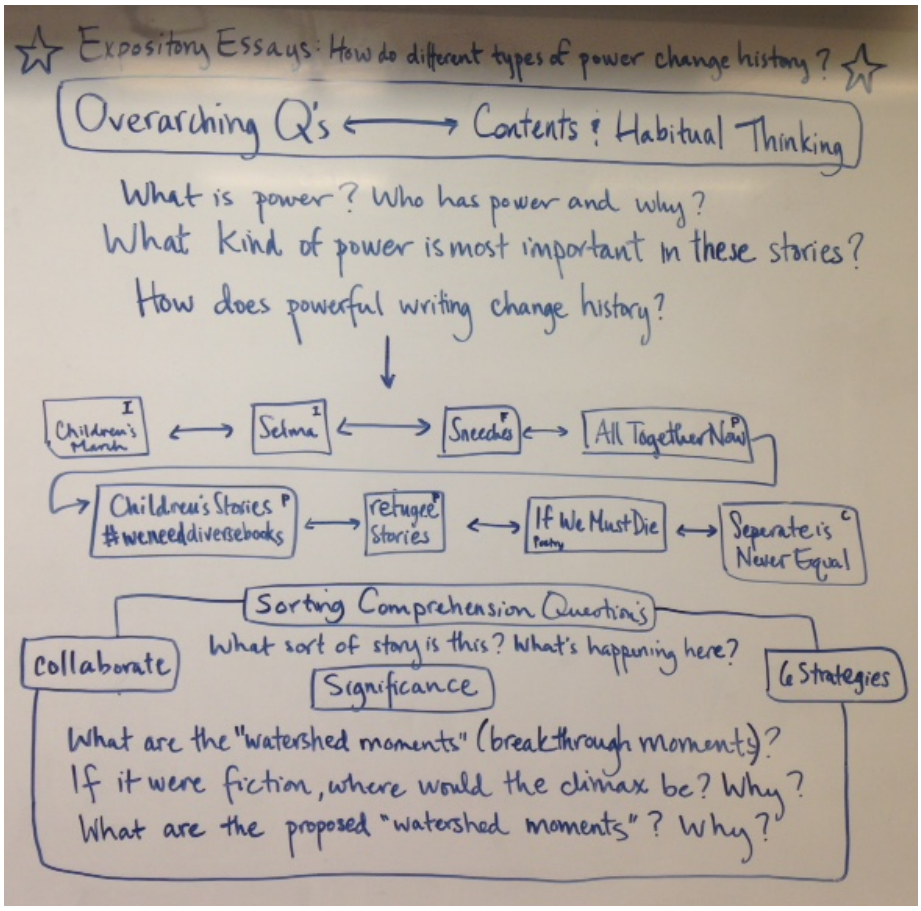
Designing and Drafting the *Power Unit*

In this section, I discuss the final periods of our planning time when we concretized all elements of the final design and draft—texts, practices, learning activities etc. of what became named the power unit. As the preceding conversation has shown Mr. François developed new and enhanced racial literacy knowledge through our initial planning. I have further highlighted above the significance of how for Mr. François, identifying a term or concept/construct that fit within his own understandings of antiracism from which to teach was critical to energizing and focusing the design of his particular instantiation of an antiracist curriculum. Already having his own deep understandings of *power*, he was able to link this knowledge to his developing understanding of the framework of racial literacy to support his curriculum planning. I, as a peer, colleague, collaborator, and co-planner, felt further empowered to actively support his construction of this curriculum feeling confident that the core idea and emphases had emerged from the teacher's own racial literacy knowledge and learning goals for his students. All of these new and enhanced knowledge, tools, and practices, with me in the role of colleague and mentor propelled us to draft and finalize the design of the antiracist literacy curriculum unit, the *Power Unit*.

By the end of two extensive curriculum planning sessions (both over three hours long, both in early December 2015), we produced the following hand-written ideas as shown in Figure 4.7 sketched out on the board in Mr. François' classroom. The shared marker and the white board supported our hopeful *wobble* (Fecho, Graham, & Hudson-Ross, 2005) into planning. Both of us brought to bear insights upon this planning process.

After four months of reflecting on and discussing how an antiracist literacy curriculum could be created, we designed the following outline together, edited it in a Google Doc, and intentionally shared it with both students and colleagues (with a genuine curiosity in the type of feedback we would receive). Once we printed copies, we shared our *Power Unit* outline and received two pieces of feedback, one from the seventh-grade literacy coach and one from a student, who said, "It looks kind of cool, I guess." (Carlos, December 13, 2015). The literacy coach, after reading over the *Power Unit* handout (Figure 4.8) referred to it as a "thoughtful Civil Rights unit" (Mrs. VanLuwen, December 13, 2015). In hindsight, we could have more effectively communicated that this was an explicitly antiracist literacy curriculum intended to develop racial literacy; which we both do now, and recommend others do as well. Explicit racial literacy learning discourses are important, just as terms regarding sociocultural issues in education are important. Other ambiguous and complex terms Mr. François and students eventually spent time discussing were words such as 'race' and 'racism' and 'antiracism'. I will describe this introduction and discussion with students in detail in the implementation findings chapter (Chapter Five).

Figure 4.1. Outcome of curriculum design process planning session notes.



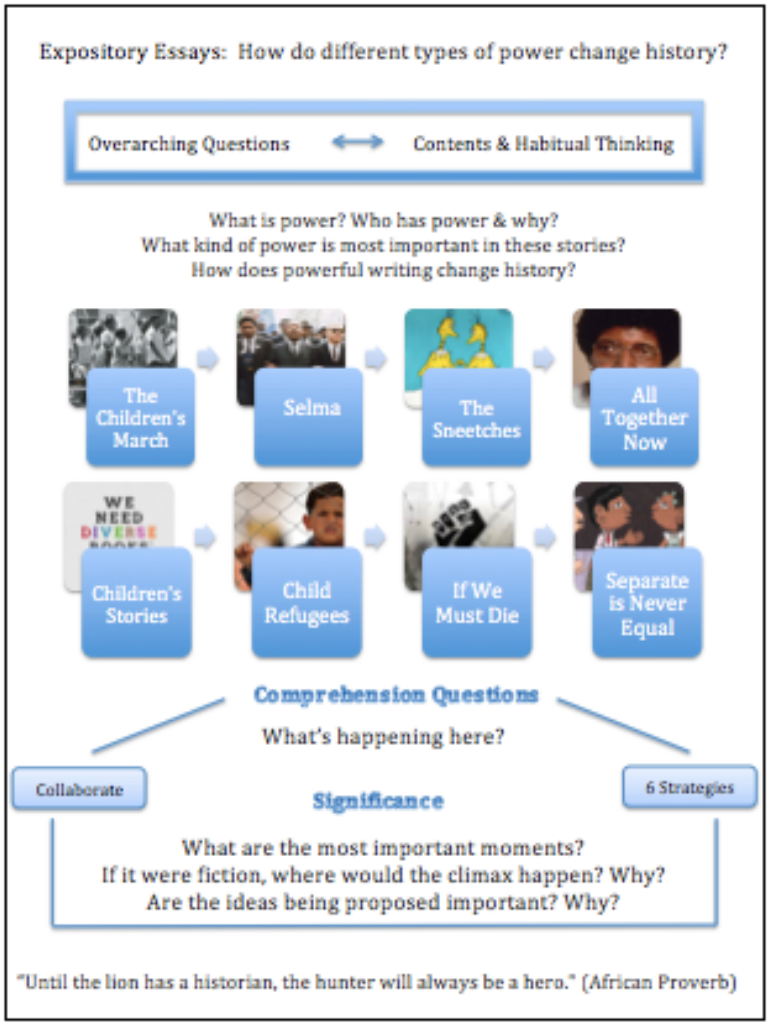
The above (Figure 4.1) outcome of the design process—the visual representation of knowledge produced and our co-constructed learning process served to support the emerging practices that resulted from designing an antiracist. While the ideas written down are certainly not all representative of an antiracist literacy curriculum, they represent multiple conversations around antiracism over time that were codified under the official curriculum. For example, there are several standards explicitly *inside the standards* (Fecho, Falter, Hong, 2016), such as *Expository Essays, 6 Strategies, Collaboration, Significance,* and *Watershed Moments* (all of which are campus initiative

related terminology) which also supports the idea that an outside the box notion such as anti-racism can exist inside the box (finding one), even inside all of the many curricular constrains of a complex context such as this.

Looking across the overarching questions, concepts, and texts in this design, we agreed that I would draft a document, and that we wanted to give the plan to students in paper hand-out format. Mr. François decided to share it with students in an effort to be transparent regarding the remaining progression of their literacy learning in this classroom from January to June, 2016.

Below, Figure 4.2 is the document I typed up after our December 8th planning session and shared with Mr. François, who approved and printed 70 copies, for each student, for us, for the seventh-grade literacy coach, and extras for the other seventh-grade English Language Arts /History teachers. This intentional gesture was a way to signal that it is possible for antiracist literacy planning to fit within the official literacy curricular guidelines. The design of an antiracist literacy curriculum is facilitated by a teacher working within, as well as, outside the literacy standards.

Figure 4.2. The Power Unit outline hand-out.



At first glance, the above handout (Figure 4.2) may appear too similar to the initial version we drafted on Mr. François's classroom whiteboard (Figure 4.1), but it contains a few note-worthy changes. At the bottom of the document, below the section marked *Significance*, we changed the wording just enough to shift the focus, but not the meaning. While planning, we wrote, "What are the watershed moments (the breakthrough moments)? If it were fiction, where would the climax be? Why? What are those proposed

watershed moments? Why?" After editing on a shared Google document, we wrote, "What are the most important moments? If it were fiction, where would the climax happen? Why? Are the ideas being proposed important? Why?" We agreed, too, that in the interest of saving space, "Why?" was serving to index a question that Mr. François asked most frequently while facilitating discussions in the implementation of the *Power Unit*: the question, "Why do you say that?" would often be followed up with, "How do you know?" This is further example of how antiracist curriculum must be able to fit within teachers' existing knowledge and instructional practices that they value and their students are used to and learn from. The move to share this handout with colleagues and students was a way to signal that anti-racist planning and implementation possible if it fits within the official curricular guidelines. Another change was the addition of the problematic "African Proverb" which, in retrospect, functioned perhaps more as an unnecessary and dated garnish. The quote we added while editing, "Until the lion has a historian, the hunter will always be the hero," was intended to allude to the importance of counter-narrative, but neither Mr. François nor I recall stating that clearly during implementation. Hence, as I will show in the following chapter, most of the students were not given time to grapple with the concept of how power is abused (the end of the year student questionnaires showed that less that 20% of them fully understood it). I mention that as a critique of our shortcoming in design and instruction, not as assessment of students' comprehension skills.

Mr. François and I also then outlined in more detail the learning goals connected to each text. The following chart (see Table 4.7 below) specifies the designed themes and

intended purposes of each text selected by the teacher. Again, in this case, film was treated as text and the reading of such text functioning a multimodal literacy practice (New London Group, 1996). The ways of thinking about the pedagogical goals and purposes of the texts align in broad ways with the official curriculum, which again, further emphasizes the teacher's approach to working within and outside the standards (first finding).

Table 4.7. Texts and literacy learning goals of the Power Unit.

Text	Main Ideas/Themes	Genres & Purposes
Selma: The Bridge to the Ballot (Brummel, 2015) Documentary film	A group of students, teachers, and activists fought a nonviolent battle to win voting rights for Black citizens in the South. The guiding questions revolve around/stem from/are grounded in presenting the power/the right of peaceful protest to cause political change. Themes of courage, determination, and joyful/peaceful disruption in the face of violence.	Documentary film for students to listen to and be able to speak to children's narratives of the Selma-to-Montgomery legacy of the sacrifices of young people whose history is rarely told. Anti-racist (Dei, 1996) literacy: Race is socially constructed, but racism is real (Dei, 1996). Racial literacy (Sealey-Ruiz & Greene, 2011) component: In addition to reading, discussing, and writing about racial issues (Rogers & Moseley, 2006) students engaged with/reading "critical" texts (i.e. film about race and racism) and learned language to discuss, problematize, refute racialized stereotypes and racist systems (p. 71, 2015).
Selma (DuVernay, 2014) Feature film	A retelling of the Civil Rights Movement peaceful protests and the complex organization required to successfully change policy with marches, spotlighting main leaders as change agents and as freedom seekers standing up for their civil right to vote, among other things. The theme of change taking time; the power/the right to vote, the significance of sitting on juries, the power of being attorneys and judges.	Feature film for students to consider how they themselves can be the change-agents at the center of the injustices they experience. Anti-racist (Dei, 1996) literacy: Euro-American dominance of 'what counts as knowledge' should be critiqued. Also, claiming an identity is a political act, a human right, and a complex process. Racial literacy (Sealey-Ruiz & Greene, 2011) component: engaging with/reading "critical" texts (i.e. films about race and racism) and learn language to discuss, problematize, refute racialized stereotypes and racist systems (p. 71, 2015).
Mighty Times: The Children's March (Teaching Tolerance, 2004) Documentary film	In 1963, the Black community of Birmingham, Alabama was under violent attack by White supremacists. Black children/youth played a vital role in restoring humanity and joy in a seemingly hopeless time. Themes of peaceful protest and the power to resist.	This documentary film was intended for students to re-consider sources of power and for students to come away able to discuss the impact of youth on the Civil Rights Movement. Anti-racist (Dei, 1996) literacy: Racism is one of many other intersecting forms of oppression (Hill-Collins, year; Dei, 1996). Additionally, to co-exist with the environment, change must start within the individual self (Dei, 1996). Furthermore, educators and students can critique the traditional systems of schooling in place (Dei, 1996).
The Sneetches (Suess, 1961) Picture book	Creatures called Sneetches create the illusion of power by de-humanizing another group and by creating a shroud of 'difference'. Epiphany strikes when a group of Sneetches realize that it does not matter whether a Sneetch has a star belly or not - they are all the same, and can live harmoniously with one another.	Picture book; race and ethnicity need not be dividing lines in our society, and that we can coexist peacefully, regardless of our external differences. Self-acclaimed privilege results in unnecessary discrimination. Anti-racist (Dei, 1996) literacy: White privilege and European colonization can be interrogated (p. 27, 1996). Racial literacy (Sealey-Ruiz & Greene, 2011).
All Together Now (Jordan, 1989) Political speech	Jordan argues that by starting with self-reflection, people can create strong relationships with people of different backgrounds, which she proposed, creates a more tolerant society. Themes center on 'soul force', the power to make changes in our own perspectives, and accept differences. Connected to *I Have a Dream* (King,	In this speech, Jordan, a Black lesbian Democrat, urges the Congress to reflect on living in harmony alongside and practice tolerance with those who are different from us (1989); our purpose was to inspire questions and invited students to respond in an artistic medium. Anti-racist (Dei, 1996) literacy: 'Inclusivity' requires confronting the challenge of 'diversity' and 'difference' (Dei, 1996). Educators can plan for powerful student-teacher-parent-community partnerships (Dei, 1996).

Table 4.7 continued

	1963): 'process of gaining our rightful place', 'dignity and discipline', meeting physical force with 'soul force', white allies 'freedom's 'inextricably bound', denouncing 'police brutality', voting as power, hopeful/'justice will prevail'/ 'let us not despair', etc.	
Separate is Never Equal: Sylvia Mendez and Her Family's Fight for Desegregation (Tonatiuh, 2014) Picture book	Tonatiuh (2014) narrates the legal case of *Mendez v. Westminster* (1947) wherein Mexican families demanded desegregation proceeding the perhaps more well-known *Brown v. Board* (1954) case. Themes of parents galvanizing other parents to gain legal support to pursue an equal education for all children; the right to equal protection under the law.	The text of this picture book provided counter-narratives (cite) of people unwilling to accept second-class citizenship. Mixtec inspired Oaxacan artwork reflects pre-Columbian Mexican culture, showing how people of color can claim their indigenous power and demand racial, linguistic, literacy access equity, . Discussions centered around how POC can align with political movements and re-humanize themselves. Anti-racist (Dei, 1996) literacy: White privilege and European colonization can be interrogated. Racial literacy (Sealey-Ruiz & Greene, 2011): Tearing at the fabric of White supremacy (Ohito, 2015). Teacher practiced 'window book' selection consciously. Discrimination has been based on ancestry and supposed "language deficiency" that denied Latino children their 14th Amendment rights.
Why Aren't Children's Stories More Racially Mixed? (Luqman, 2014) Editorial essay	This is essentially the *We Need Diverse Books* platform from the perspective of a parent; more books should feature diverse characters; all children should see themselves in books; *Mirrors, Windows, Sliding Glass Doors* (Bishop, 1990);	Essay; inviting students to reflect upon and question the *white ga* children's literature; racial confines hurt everyone (*danger of a s* *tory*); Teacher used text to practice persuasive writing. Anti-raci Dei, 1996) literacy: White privilege and European colonization be interrogated (Dei, 1996). Refusing to privilege Whiteness and llowing the White gaze to dominate (Morrison, year). Racial lit Sealey-Ruiz & Greene, 2011): recognize need for and accept tas holding everyone accountable for practicing racial literacy in the contexts (Sealey-Ruiz & Greene, 2015)
We Need to Learn From Child Refugees (Gomez, 2014) Editorial essay	This essay uses emotional ethos to feature the youth of Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala escape and survive violence. Themes include examining privilege; the power of courage; the right to persevere	After reading this essay, students should be able to reflect, discuss, and write about the possibilities of empathy towards the current Central-American refugee crisis; Teacher used text to practice persuasive writing.
If We Must Die (McCay, 1919)	Written in response to the anti-Black violence (Red Summer 1919); sonnet begs Black people to stand up and fight for their rights; the power/the right to resist.	Poem; Students read and responded to a sonnet; Teacher invites students to discuss types of power evident in the writing; students pick a color to tag their theme on a shared piece of poster paper.

CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter, I presented insights that emerged from analysis of Mr. François' conceptualizing and designing of an antiracist literacy curriculum with my assistance as a researcher, a 'low-key mentor', and as a peer scholar. The two curriculum design related findings the emerged include: 1) Planning for an antiracist (Dei, 1996) literacy

curriculum is facilitated by teachers working *within and outside* of the provided curriculum to find connections to that official curriculum, and to further emphasize teaching and learning racial literacies and antiracist pedagogies; 2) literacy teachers can and should foster their own frameworks of racial literacy to support antiracist literacy curriculum planning by identifying a term or concept or construct that fits within their own understandings of antiracist (Dei, 1996) pedagogy from which to teach reading and writing and or literacy through history; and 3) teachers require time for reflection, deliberation, and revision around curriculum texts, topics, and themes. In this case, a recursive and extensive process of co-planning conversations were essential to the design of the anti-racist curriculum, as deliberations over curricular texts, pedagogical practices, and anti-racist theory and research required collaborative and individual reflections with a peer-researcher.

In Chapter Five, I will present findings from the implementation of this curriculum as observed in the teaching of the *Power Unit*. In that chapter, I address the study's last question, which addresses the specifics of how the teacher concretized, through implementation, an anti-racist literacy curriculum, and how that curriculum unit was understood and engaged with by the students. Hence, teacher learning, student response, and racial literacy learning will also be spotlighted in Chapter Five.

Chapter 5: Implementation of an Antiracist Literacy Curriculum

INTRODUCTION

In Chapter Four, I presented the findings that address how a teacher designed an antiracist (Dei, 1996; Ohito, 2016; Troyna & Carrington, 2011; Wagner, 2005) literacy curriculum. In this chapter, I discuss the pedagogical process of implementing that curriculum and the effects on teacher learning and student responses. I address the following research questions of the dissertation:

1. What is involved in the process of a teacher implementing an antiracist reading and writing curriculum? How does a teacher implement such a curriculum?
2. What are the effects of implementing an antiracist reading and writing curriculum on classroom interactions, on teacher learning, and on students?

I present Mr. François' experiences of implementing the *Power Unit*, a literacy curriculum designed to be explicitly antiracist (Dei, 1996; 2000; 2006) and expound on antiracist teaching findings resulting from student responses to this type of curricular intervention. I collected data connected to the effects of the *Power Unit* on students' reading and writing experiences and identities. Also informed by data gathered from teaching and learning in this seventh-grade reading and writing classroom, I explored what the teaching entailed, how the students were impacted by this type of teaching, and if or how the teacher changed.

The following findings presented in this chapter explore insights related to the implementation of an antiracist reading and writing curriculum:

- Finding 1. Dialogue around racism functions as a teaching practice and conduit for antiracist teaching and racial literacy learning. Leading and facilitating discussions, sharing personal stories, and showing emotion in dialogue and discussions around race and racism was a central way in which this curriculum was implemented by the teacher and through which teacher and students learned. These dialogues included the practice of vulnerable confidence (defined later in the chapter as a teaching practice finding) by the teacher, by which I mean the teacher openly teaching and reflecting on issues of personal and emotional experiences with race and racism with students and his stances on racialized phenomenon.
- Finding 2. Multimodality functions as a tool to teach and learn about racial literacy. Multimodality worked to support student engagement with texts and topics, prompt discussion, and connect themes about race and racism across multiple genres, timeframes, and contexts in which students read and composed.
- Finding 3. Student responses included self-perceptions of improvement of their racial literacy and their conventional (reading and writing) skills. Many students attributed the development of their reading and writing skills to the antiracist curriculum (namely the *Power Unit*). Student reports (survey and interview data) as well as analysis of other data such as classroom observations and student work demonstrated that students:

a. Expanded their racial discourse and learned language new to them in order to name, analyze, and develop antiracist perspectives on historical and ongoing forms of oppression and power structures.

b. Were able to engage in activist ways of reading and writing, including writing about various forms of oppression, particularly racism in the U.S., both in the focal classroom and other school and social contexts.

- Finding 4. Teaching practices and strategies beneficial to the implementation of an antiracist reading and writing curriculum included the following:
    a. Providing students a variety of texts that differed vastly in terms of their modes, sources, and time periods (both historical and contemporary) that were read and discussed in conjunction with one another. These textual practices facilitated connections to students' daily, lived experiences with racism and other forms of oppression across multiple contexts (for example in the media and during personal encounters).
    b. Emphasizing counter-narrative not as a term, but as a teaching and learning tool. For example, the teacher postulating 'counter-narrative' as a tool assisted students' sense making of counter-stereotypical messages of historically marginalized people, for example their own strategies of pursuing racial justice. 'Counter-narrative' also facilitated re-orienting perspectives and uses of Hip Hop lyrics as literature (not a path to literature) and as poetry texts to teach with and learn from.

c. Providing students discursive tools: identifying and teaching key terms with which to name, analyze, and develop deeper understandings about race, racism and other forms of oppression (i.e. using *enslaved person* rather than *slave*, teaching terms such as *interest convergence* and *oppression*).

d. Practicing vulnerable confidence. This practice was enacted by the teacher through openly teaching and reflecting on issues of personal experiences with race and racism with students and his stances on racialized phenomenon.

- Finding 5. Teacher learning and change through implementation of an antiracist reading and writing curriculum included heightened racial literacy knowledge and increased interest in curriculum design.

The overall organization of this chapter builds around three major sections: (a) a detailed description of the implementation process with a brief statement on the dialogic and multimodal nature of implementing this curriculum; (b) the response and learning of the teacher, which entailed heightened racial literacy knowledge and increased interest in curriculum design, and, lastly; and (c) the responses of the students.

Implementation Process

This first section addresses the question of what is involved in the process of a teacher implementing an antiracist reading and writing curriculum. I will provide a description of the teaching of this antiracist reading and writing curriculum including

practices, strategies, texts, and tools used as well as the role of dialogue and multimodality in teaching the *Power Unit*.

Implementation Description

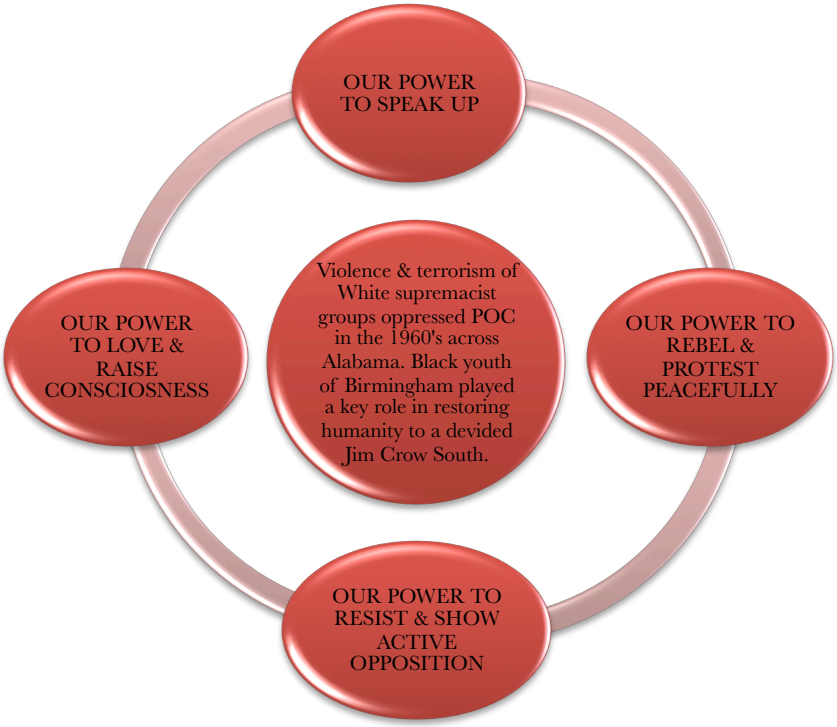
The first day back for students after the winter break, January 3, 2016, marked the onset of the *Power Unit* and this unit continued guiding instruction daily, with the exception of district assessment days, until June 2, 2016, which was the last day of the academic school year for students. This antiracist reading and writing curriculum, the *Power Unit*, was created to guide students to enhance and further develop their existing racial literacies and become knowledgeable and comfortable with applying these racial literacies to interpret historical and contemporary racialized phenomena. As I described in chapter four, the lessons in this unit were designed around themes of power, struggles against oppression, and the resistance movements of youth to abuses of power throughout and since the 1960's.

As an example of his most typical teaching, I turn to a day at the start of the *Power Unit*. Mr. François facilitated a shared viewing of *Selma* (DuVernay, 2014), that explored themes similar to *Selma: Bridge to the Ballot* (Brummel, 2015) and *Mighty Times: The Children's March* (Houston, 2004). Students were seated in their table-groups of five, and asked to collaborate to make meaning of the film, and have discussions around new words, big ideas, and questions that arose. Before the lunch break, Mr. François paused discussion and asked the students to "write to think" in the form of a prompted *Quick Write* about which concepts struck them as most salient. The following is an example of how I observed such writing instruction:

> As soon as the students were focused, Mr. François previewed the film with students, respond to it as an actual text, discussing it colloquially, stimulating interest with various reiterations of the 'Today's Objective' slide displayed. Mr. François reads along as students follow along. "First, let's unpack what this is about and then we'll get into more analysis. As I walk around, I notice Lorena has written, 'persuasive essay on power' at the top of her notebook page. Underneath it, she noted, 'We need to come together, across cultures.'" (Field Notes, January 6, 2016)

The curricular texts, topics, and discussions of the *Power Unit* allowed Mr. François to introduce students to the concept of power in the face of oppression. The instructional aims of the unit were implemented to be antiracist and to focus on the deconstruction of race as a social construct and to explore racism's historic and contemporary contexts. In order to further clarify the general aims of the *Power Unit*, Figure 5.1 below represents a conceptual overview of these big ideas.

Figure 5.1. *Powers at Play in the Civil Rights Era, concept map.*



While the film *Selma* (DuVernay, 2014) was far from perfect, it did provide a *counter-narrative* to the white streamed history that a majority of Mr. François' students had been provided up until this point in their education (Urrieta, 2010). Throughout the film, Dr. Martin Luther King was rarely portrayed alone, but he was consistently shown in the company of determined colleagues in the Southern Christian Leadership Council. This is significant, as most students learn from an official curriculum (Apple, 1999) to identify Dr. King as a 'magical negro' (Hughey, 2009; Glenn & Cunningham, 2009), as opposed to positioning him as a leading participant of a well-structured civil rights movement.

In the second scene of the film, the horrific depiction of the Birmingham Baptist church bombing in which four young Black girls were killed by the members of the Ku

Klux Klan. Later, an older Black citizen was portrayed as being denied access to register to vote by a white clerk who appeared hatefully to be taking joy in the humiliation. The representation of white supremacists as villains stands out in the context of how this era of history is typically portrayed in secondary curriculum and textbooks (Aldrich, 2006; Moreau, 2010; Solórzano, 1997). *Selma* (DuVernay, 2014) presented examples of systematic intimidation and unpunished terrorism from White supremacists, which is both politically and artistically a bold statement and an important one for students to comprehend. Understanding the significance of the Voting Rights Act proved a challenging concept for many seventh graders, as the curriculum often whitewashes (García, Bybee, & Urrieta, 2014) critical milestones in Civil Rights era history (Vasquez Heilig, Brown, & Brown, 2012). Mr. François re-iterated to students:

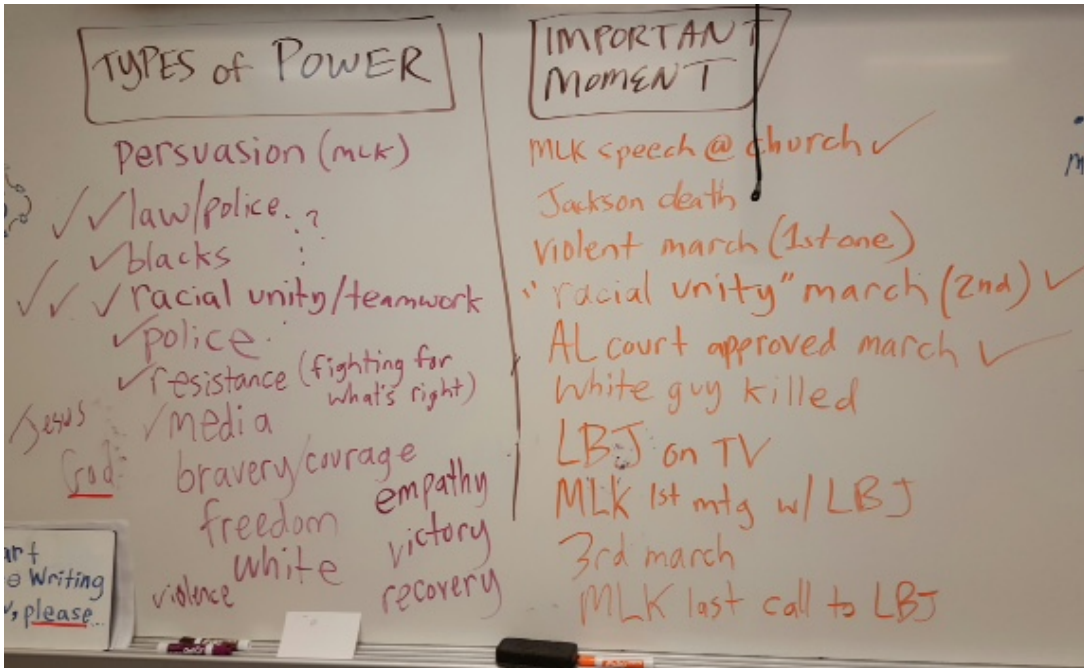
> If you cannot register to vote, you cannot serve on a jury, you cannot choose the officials in office or run for public office, which is what was practically keeping Black and Latino people out of civic participation and continued subjugation. Just wanted to make sure y'all remembered that. (Classroom Observation, January 6, 2016)

There were other crucial aspects of the Voting Rights Act that Mr. François wanted his students to remember, and each time a significant event or conversation took place, he would pause and allow time for discussion. For example, Mr. François paused the film to answer students' questions about the FBI and Hoover, and explicitly explained how abuses of power maintained the political and economic interests of White supremacists. During a whole class discussion, he brought up the idea that particular government

officials blatantly dismantled efforts of the Civil Rights Movement, and how president Lyndon B. Johnson denied Dr. King's multiple pleadings for change in legislation until he was convinced by Governor Wallace's irrational white supremacist ideologies.

After the students returned from the lunch break, Mr. François scribed their talk during a whole class discussion, jotting down the big ideas they generated as well as exact quotes and student selected terms on the white board. The process of writing out students' thoughts as conversations continued served the flow of dialogue and allowed students multiple chances to re-think and re-tell ideas that their peers presented for analysis. In Figure 5.2 I include the board photographed discussion notes from the focal class' discussion around *Selma* (DuVernay, 2014). The film's content being presented as curriculum-in-use (Apple, 1979) was the historic 1965 voting rights marches from Selma to Montgomery led by James Bevel, Hosea Williams, Martin Luther King Jr. and John Lewis. After the students finished watching the film in class, they were invited to reflect on and listen to *Glory* (Common & J. Legend, 2014, Classroom Observations, January 7, 2016).

Figure 5.2. *Classroom discussion around* Selma



In order to mediate a discussion about both the content (which included several historic events) and the implication of the content, Figure 5.2 shows student-generated ideas. Mr. François listed the types of power and salient moments that students noticed.

The texts used to teach the antiracist reading and writing curriculum were often multimodal, often looking at historic examples of oppression, as well as contemporary instances or racism. *Selma* (DuVernay, 2014), though obviously a film, practically discussed and examined as a text, was an effective and strategic tool used by Mr. François to mediate learning in modes that were considered accessible and engaging by students. As the second implementation finding states, multimodality worked to support student engagement with texts and topics, prompt discussion, and connect themes about race and racism across multiple genres, timeframes, and contexts in which students read and composed.

Portraying the struggles of historic public figures such as Coretta Scott King, Jim Clark, John Lewis, Andrew Young, Lyndon B. Johnson, and George Wallace appeared to help students conjure more textured understandings of how the power of people in the face of oppression (both as individuals and in groups) have prompted change in policies and fueled social justice movements. For example, during the same week he introduced *Selma* (DuVernay, 2014), Mr. François also exposed students to a variety of current news articles and editorials related to contemporary voting rights issues.

Practices, Strategies, Texts, and Tools

One of the implementation findings (finding four) states that the literacy teaching practices and strategies beneficial to the implementation of an antiracist reading and writing curriculum include a) providing students a variety of texts, b) providing students discursive tools, c) proposing counter-narrative as a framework of understanding, and, d) practicing vulnerable confidence.

Providing Students a Variety of Texts

Throughout the course of the *Power Unit*, film, poetry, picture books, and conscious Hip Hop, were read, analyzed, and discussed with the same seriousness as traditional texts such as books and short stories. Throughout his teaching, analysis and discussion of power related themes required multimodal texts that differed vastly in terms of their sources and time periods to be presented in conjunction with one another. This facilitated connections to students' lived experiences with racism and other forms of oppression across multiple contexts. From examples in the media to personal encounters

with racism and xenophobia, students were exposed to a wide variety of texts that addressed the same issues.

The touchstone pieces that anchored the *Power Unit* included documentary films such as *Selma: The Bridge to the Ballot* (Brummel, 2015), *Mighty Times: The Children's March* (Houston, 2004), feature films such as *Selma* (DuVernay, 2014) and *The Great Debaters* (Eisele, 2007), picture books such as *The Sneetches* (Seuss, 1961) and *Separate is Never Equal: Sylvia Mendez and Her Family's Fight for Desegregation* (Tonatiuh, 2014). Mr. François also focused on persuasive pieces such as *All Together Now* (Jordan, 1989), *Why Aren't Children's Stories More Racially Mixed?* (Luqman, 2014), and *We Need to Learn From Child Refugees* (Gomez, 2014). An assortment of Harlem Renaissance poems were also featured, for example the classic *If We Must Die* (McCay, 1919) as well as poetry written by contemporary urban youth (*Def Poetry Jam*, 2014).

In addition to those originally planned texts, Mr. Francois supplemented instruction with a variety of more contemporary texts to thematically connect the idea of the power of young people, including several coming-of-age Hip Hop tracks such as *Good Kid* (Lamar, 2012), *Poetic Justice* (Lamar, 2012), *Me Against the World* (Shakur, 1995), political call-to-action pieces such as *Let This be the Beginning* (Johnson, 2010) and *Power* (Da'Shade, 2016) appeared to enhance the relevance of the *Power Unit*'s themes. This teaching practice of offering students a diverse variety of text seemed beneficial to the implementation of an antiracist reading and writing curriculum, as conceptualizing and discussing the undercurrent of *power in the face of oppression* helped develop racial literacy in students.

Each Thursday and Friday that I observed the his teaching, Mr. François deliberately and repeatedly invited students to write and reflect in response to these varied texts by using the guiding questions, "How did young people use their power to impact history?" and "How do you as young people use your power to impact your community now?" Mr. François helped students find the common thread of across these multimodal pieces by guiding their reading and discussions back to the theme of power.

Proposing Counter-Narrative as a Framework for Understanding

Counter-narrative (Delgado, 2000) can be used as an instructional strategy to empower historically misrepresented students, not just through the analysis of counter-narrative texts, but also in the sharing and discussing of counter-narrative stories, worldviews, and perspectives. While Mr. François did not teach and assess the term *counter-narrative* in class explicitly, he demonstrated a nuanced appreciation of the concept in conversations with me during the implementation of the *Power Unit*.

Counter-narrative functions as an argument to dispute a commonly held belief. Counter-narration embodies a method of telling the stories of historically silenced voices - analyzing and challenging the narratives of those in power to explore alternative ways of knowing and understanding (Delgado, 2000). Use of and reflection on counter-narratives told by people of color can provide space for readers to interrupt the existing discourses that serve to marginalize communities and people of color in their negative, deficit-oriented portrayals (Lopez, 2003). Antiracist teaching allows room for counter-narrative in the opportunity to deconstruct race as a social concept, actively addresses the realities of racism with students, and thus determining that white supremacy, white

privilege, and European colonization must be interrogated in relevant and meaningful ways. Counter-narrative concepts can challenge teachers to discuss racism as only one of many other intersecting forms of oppression. Thus, teachers who engage with presenting counter-narratives in the curriculum could shift into antiracist teaching if they agree that "educators have a duty to teach about the scourge of racism, sexism, classism and other forms of social oppression" and that "educators have a responsibility to teach students about social and civic responsibility" (Dei, 1996, p. 17).

The most frequent example of counter-narrative functioning during the implementation of this curriculum was Mr. François' counter-narrating the worth, skills, and intelligence of his Black students, most often, his Black male students. On a weekly basis, Mr. François would openly praise Black students to the class that majority of self-identifying Latinos, for whom he took an appreciative stance (Bomer, 2011) with regard to their linguistic flexibilities. For any teacher to privilege Black students by detailing their the strengths and merits in the current political and social climate would be a significant pedagogical strategy, because it helps relay a counter world-view that celebrates a positive portrayal of *Black excellence* (Ladson-Billings, 1990). Mr. François responded to individual Black students when they asked complex questions with high-fives and praises such as "Hash-tag Black girl magic, I feel that!" (Field Notes, January 22, 2016; February 4, 2016; March 3, 2016), or more specific feedback such as, "Doctor James is droppin' that metalinguistic knowledge today" (Field Notes, February 18, 2016; April 21, 2016). Frequently, Mr. François lauded the qualities of his Black male students' deft writing, comparing them to famous authors and successful Black business people

(Field Notes, February 5, 2016; February 12, 2016; March 11, 2016; March 31, 2016). The counter-narrative approach Mr. François took to supporting his Black students was used as a systematic tool to confront and contest prevailing stereotypes and Whitesplained perspectives on Black lives (Milner, 2008). Mr. François appeared intentional about using counter-narrative as part of his pedagogy as he reflected on this teaching practice at the end of the year, "I think that the times I reminded students of their own greatness, that it gave them more practice thinking of themselves from that empowered viewpoint" (Teacher Interview, June 3, 2016).

Another way that Mr. François emphasized counter-narrative as a teaching and learning tool was through regularly inviting and hosting guest speakers of color into his classroom; writers, activists, artists, business owners, architects, poets, politicians – all of whom either self-identified as Latino or Black. By sharing their life histories, these classroom guest speakers promoted counter-narratives to Whitewashed definitions of success. As speakers engaged with students, common themes in their messages were around nuancing how racial and linguistic struggle often leads to progress and the importance of self-empowerment (Field Notes January 22, 2016; February 26, 2016; March 3, 2016; April 5, 2016; May 20, 2016). For example, Mr. Newman, a Black father of one of the students, shared about his local lived experience enduring persistent Jim Crow laws prior to and during de-segregation (Field Notes, January 22, 2016). After hearing the guest's counter-narrative, Annabel remarked, "Hearing it from Mr. Newman in person, it hurt. Like, the way our history textbook tells it ain't the real story. Black families were hard-core to survive it" (Student Interview, January 23, 2016). The sharing

and discussing of counter-narrative stories facilitated a way of re-orienting perspectives that worked well as both a teaching and learning tool.

Providing Students with Discursive Tools and Teaching New Terms

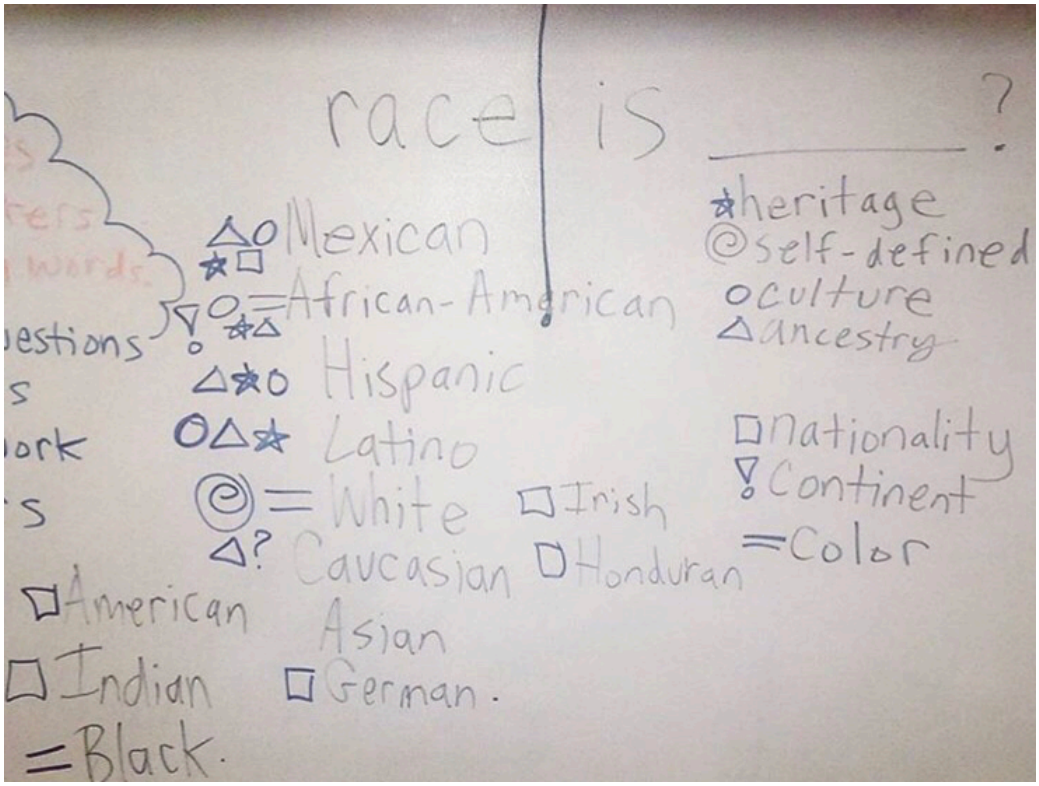
Providing students discursive tools was a racial literacy teaching practice beneficial to the implementation of the *Power Unit*. The teacher identified and taught key terms with which to name, analyze, and develop deeper understandings about race, racism, and other forms of oppression. "Negotiate, demonstrate, and resist; three habits of mind and body to make powerful change," explained Mr. François (Classroom Observation, January 6, 2016). He then elaborated on the work of raising white consciousness about violent Jim Crow policies. For example, after encouraging students to discuss various types of power and significant plot points in *Selma* (DuVernay, 2014), Mr. François invited students to draft a brief statement in an argumentative style as identified on the district curriculum documents as *expository essay* and appearing on the state writing assessment as a prompt for students to write an argumentative response. By this point of the lesson that particular day, most students were ready to organize their ideas around these relatively complicated concepts. Students who were not as confident were encouraged to form pairs and use the notes on the board to anchor their language as a way to re-consider and discuss ideas presented.

Throughout the course of watching the film, Mr. François also paused to point out that people across the nation were not aware of the way Alabama police murdered Jimmy Lee, but that the murder of a White clergyman prompted response and empathy from White liberals and various forms of support. As another example, Mr. François used

racial literacy discourse to respond to a student's question about the Selma to Montgomery March's approval by the Alabama court. A student asked, "So that White judge approved their peaceful protest, and *then* they finally went on and marched?" Mr. François replied, "Well that *is* the power of interest convergence" (Mr. François, Classroom Observation, January 6, 2016).

In addition to *interest convergence*, the classroom word wall grew with several key racial literacy terms that both the students and the teacher used. They included *segregation*, *de-segregation*, *colonialism*, *oppression*, *human rights*, *peaceful protest*, *boycott*, *race relations*, *prejudice*, *xenophobia*, *homophobia*, *tolerance*, *rebellion*, and *resistance*. This shifting in racial literacy discourse included several classroom conversations in which the notion of 'race' was troubled. For instance, during one such documented dialogue with students, Mr. François probed and challenged students' ideologies around racialized identities. The following image of the classroom whiteboard after one such conversation was posted by the teacher on his Instagram feed; the caption reads, "I give up, Mister!" (Figure 5.3, January 20, 2016).

Figure 5.3. *Teacher notes of classroom discussion aimed at 'troubling the idea of race'*



Mr. François invited students to talk at their table groups regarding what they believed racial identity to be and how they self-identified. “What is race? How do you racially identify?” (Classroom Observation, January 20, 2016). As students shared their varied responses, the teacher repeated the learning goal to disrupt their pre-existing ideas and encouraged their discomfort, ambiguity, and cognitive dissonance. The terms *heritage*, *culture*, *color*, *continent*, *nationality*, and *ancestry* were all distinct terms mostly used by students to clarify what they meant by their responses. Mr. François then attempted to apply the same terms students used to categorize their responses. “I love how y’all are re-thinking what you thought you knew about these so-called categories!” (Classroom Observations, January 20, 2016). These increasingly nuanced dialogues about

defining race allowed the pedagogical practice of providing and allowing students to develop new discursive tools and language in becoming more racially literate.

Practicing Vulnerable Confidence as Teaching Strategy

Balancing professional vulnerability (Lasky, 2005) and confidence during the teaching of complex and challenging curriculum appears crucial, if not necessary. Literacy teachers must be both vulnerable and confident in exploring and reviewing their own racial literacy knowledge while doing the difficult work of teaching around race and racism. Vulnerable confidence is a term I use that relies heavily on Lasky's (2005) definition of *professional vulnerability*, that is, "a fluid state of being" that can manifest as an "experience of openness and trust, which is necessary for learning and relationship building" and includes "the possibility of embarrassment, loss, or emotional pain because people believe that they, another individual, or a situation will benefit from this openness" (Lasky, 2005, p. 907). The *confidence* portion of the term *vulnerable confidence* draws on a more general idea that powerful teachers can be confortable with themselves and convicted in their beliefs. The notion of *vulnerable confidence* also draws on Theoharis's (2008) idea of *arrogant humility*, which was used to describe a common disposition among social justice oriented principals. *Arrogant humility* (Theoharis, 2008), like *vulnerable confidence*, involves:

> a paradoxical blend of arrogance and humility...arrogance being that headstrong belief that one is right and that one knows what is best; the humility being one's continual self-doubt of one's abilities and knowledge, including the willingness to

> admit mistakes both publicly and privately, and questioning whether they are doing any good in their positions (Theoharis, 2008, p. 15).

On one hand it was with such vulnerable confidence that Mr. François acknowledged how antiracist instruction could add depth, substance, and relevance to the official curriculum as he understood students' anxiety about President Trump's anti-immigration stances. On the other hand, Mr. François contextualized the systemic and historic aspect of racist and xenophobic rhetoric and policies by comparing Trump to past presidents, using one of his racial literacy teaching practices of relating past and present oppressions. By providing students sources across time periods, he assisted in "connecting lots of dots" in naming or troubling the racism they experience in their daily-lived experiences with racism and other forms of oppression across multiple contexts. Mr. François reflected to the teacher next door, who expressed concern about the antiracist curriculum:

> This type of teaching is important in the age of Trump, because the students think Trump is the worst thing ever, whereas I think, Trump is no Steven F. Austin. Trump is no Thomas Jefferson; Trump is not that big of a deal compared to what it's always been. That starts our lens into history, looking at it for what it is. If I'm going to prepare them to interact with the world they live in, which is my job, I have to give them something that respects their position in society and ends up connecting a lot of dots for things that they already know and understand but haven't actually put a label on. So again, identity construction and experience, honoring that, but also pushing it forward to consider the power and agency they have. (Mr. François in conversation with fellow teacher, January 27, 2016)

By sharing his views with the skeptical teacher next door, Mr. François showed a bold or perhaps even arrogant devotion to the concepts behind the *Power Unit.* He exposed his assertions around not just the purposes of teaching in antiracist ways, but also his belief about his role as a literacy teacher, to develop what Freire & Macedo (1995) called a *critical consciousness* among his students. As he spoke, Mr. François knew that his colleague did not share his point of view, but expressed his assertion with conviction regardless. This is an example of vulnerable confidence, in that he openly revealed his "multidimensional, multifaceted emotional experience that individuals can feel in an array of contexts" (Lasky, 2005, p. 901). As a person and as a teacher, Mr. François was openly willingly to "facilitate learning, trust building, and collaboration" (Lasky, 2005, p. 901).

The Latrell Jones Junior dialogue segment below was a classroom event selected to exemplify this teacher's vulnerable confidence. By drawing upon a local case of police brutality, Mr. François connected how civil rights laws apply in current contexts while at the same time showing a great deal of humility and vulnerability.

The issue of police violence in the current U.S. context has not yet been incorporated widely as a central part of the official literacy curriculum. Middle school teachers can and should practice ways to embrace the idea of *conforming while resisting* (Dei, 1996) by discussing cases of police brutality. Even though Mr. François did not plan to teach lessons connected to the Black Lives Matter movement in the *Power Unit*, he did display his racial literacy competence, as well as his vulnerable confidence with students this memorable Thursday afternoon. The class was 4th period, just before lunch,

and Mr. François had a particular lesson planned. Through his discussion of a local case of police murdering an un-armed Black man, Mr. François engaged students by reflecting his personal and political viewpoints around racially motivated violence that police enact, and how he as a teacher and as a Black man understands, embodies, and expands his racial literacy knowledge.

The following classroom excerpt shows how the pedagogical practice of allowing the unofficial knowledge to become official curriculum knowledge in an example of when Mr. François made terms and issues connected to police brutality as a form of racial literacy teaching for explicitly antiracist purposes relevant. Many of the students on some level could recount narratives of violent murders of members of the Black community at the hands of police, either through the news or through social media.

Mr. François stood by the white board and scribed their talk while responding to their questions around the Voting Rights Act of 1965. One student, André, made a comment about the lack of rights for Black communities in the pre-civil rights era South and asked Mr. François for clarification about police shootings. A difficult dialogue proceeded with the teacher agreeing on the importance of voting rights, but asking D'Andre to clarify which shooting he meant. D'Andre clarified that he meant police killing Black people in the past. Mr. François then pointed out that police killing Black people is still a contemporary issue and another student, Tamika, agreed and then added that police do not typically get arrested for their murders of Black men, after which point all at once, the class erupts with conversation, including Jerome, Angela, and Trinity talking about racism in the justice system as everyone seems to be talking to the other

students at their tables. After waiting for the class' attention, the teacher invited the whole class to look up the name, Latrell Jones Jr., on their devices and students took out their phones or iPads.

Without prompting, Trinity began to read out loud to the class from her phone: "The cop who killed Latrell Jones Jr., a 32-year-old African American man and father of three." The article detailed how an off-duty police officer commandeered another civilian's car to chase down, confronted, and fatally shot unarmed Latrell Jones Jr. Trinity paused, her tears welling, and the classroom erupted into multiple dialogues, with students talking over each other, all asking questions simultaneously. Mr. François called everyone's attention to Trinity's reading. The rest of the story gave details of how the officer who happened to be a white man was arrested, charged with Manslaughter, and how the family of Latrell Jones Jr. received a million-dollar settlement. However, because the off-duty cop happened to be a Federal Officer on reserve duty, he was granted immunity and released. The students got back to asking multiple questions and looking things up on their devices. At least three separate conversations were going on about various police brutality cases. Every student seemed to have something to say: One group of students talked about how Diablo had been shot 44 times while unarmed; and another group of students talked about the orange tip of Tamir Rice's toy gun. In a moment of vulnerability, Mr. François shared, "I went to a meeting with the Chief of Police after that shooting." Perhaps due to his solemn tone, the students stopped discussing and listened to Mr. François as he explained as follows:

Mr. François: The Citytown police called it a Town Hall meeting, that's where community, police, whatever gets together to show concern about this, and they all meet, and talk. This was about a week after it all happened with Latrell Jones Jr. And the Chief of Police, he came out to address everybody and says, "I want to make a really important point about how to avoid these kinds of shootings and these kinds of deaths," is what he said, "When the police are trying to talk to you, don't run." That was his first point! I was so mad. Man I was *so* mad! I was like, "If you have a Taser [gun] pointed at me, a gun, a night stick, a car, and a police force, are you telling me that if I run, basically, if I run, you might shoot me?!" That's how I took it. That was his first point! I mean, come on, his very first point? (Chief of police voice again) "I'm so glad you guys are here. And I just want to make a point, because these situations shouldn't happen…"

Jerome: That makes me think back to Selma, and voting rights for people.

Trinity: And we *have* the right to vote.

Mr. François: I see, so let's keep thinking about how that effects what we're talking about… (waits a few seconds, one of the table groups start whispering, Mr. François walks over to them). So you're saying you can vote against a Donald Trump, alright. What else?

Trinity: Our opinions.

Mr. François: Be allowed to give our opinions, alright. What else do you can you do besides opinions when you have the right to vote? What else did Dr.

King say you could do with the right to vote? [Two table groups erupt in conversation].

Jerome: You could be in the courthouse!

Mr. François: Yes, you can serve on a jury.

Jerome: Yeah!

Mr. François: And what does that mean?

Felipe: That means you can also be a judge.

Trinity: So you're the one who says who's right or who's innocent!

At this point, the lunch bell rang and the class surged into multiple conversations. To be clear, this portion of class time was not planned as a lesson for the *Power Unit*, but rather emerged as an aspect of what could be expected to occur during the implementation of an antiracist literacy unit. As he recounted the symbolic continuation of that violence the Chief of Police's 'just don't run and you won't get shot' message, Mr. François exposed his vulnerability in the form of disappointment and disbelief. On one hand, in the class discussion, Mr. François demonstrated vulnerable confidence by inviting students into uncovering details surrounding a local, relatively recent event of tragic proportions. On the other hand, Mr. François confidently activated his racial literacy knowledge, while at the same time retelling a case of police brutality, which stirred up painful emotions in him around the discomforting truths (Boler & Zembylas, 2003) of the case. Instead of coating the case in a false sense of resolution, he showed honest distress about the heartbreak he experienced when an authority in power expressed a racist ideology.

Teachers must indeed be both vulnerable and confident in sharing, reviewing, and exploring their own developing racial literacy knowledge.

Antiracist Learning through Racial Literacy Activation in Classroom Dialogue

This unplanned, valuable teaching and learning moment allowed the students to question the power available to communities of color. They ultimately concluded that they can and do indeed have control, as one student recognized, "You can be the judge!" in any state or federal courtroom, and call verdicts. Mr. François leveraged students' cell phones as research tools to become more politically aware, more critically conscious (Freire & Macedo, 2005), while relinquishing the control of the narrative and encouraging students to uncover their own racial literacy knowledge.

In the moment, he chose to invite students into the process of uncovering an emotionally charged issue, because of who he is as a teacher, and because he was in touch with the pulse of the local community of color. Mr. François showed a desire to be intertwined with the stories and the lives of his students, which connected to his ability and willingness to be uncomfortable with bringing up and grappling with uncomfortable issues. Literacy teachers can work towards expressing solidarity with the communities they teach in similar ways. Implementing an antiracist curriculum requires not just including and exploring historic racism, but also examining the current nuances of racial violence against communities of color. Teachers can identify injustices if they choose to understand racism's historical contexts as well as current forms of systemic racism. Teaching within this type of curriculum requires boldly embracing a counter-hegemonic stance (Zembylas, 2013) that then fuels a desire to comprehend the stories of students and

their families and feel the urgency for change. In the case of this Latrell Jones Jr. discussion, Mr. François functioned as a Black man still trying to make sense of police brutality. It was with a disposition of vulnerable confidence, that he chose to bring this case up to concretize his point about the power of his students. Mr. François could have picked another police brutality case, such as that of Freddie Gray or Eric Garner, to foster a dialogue around police violence and make his points, but instead chose to bring up something much deeper and more personally relevant. This type of implementation is also connected to how teachers can contextualize a piece of unofficial knowledge, which was outside the box, yet inside the official standards of literacy knowledge.

The Role of Multimodality

Analysis of classroom reading of and discussion around *Selma* (DuVernay, 2014) as a classroom event exemplified how dialogue functioned as a teaching practice and conduit for antiracist learning and racial literacy learning and multimodality functions as a tool to teach and learn about racial literacy. Multimodality framed much of how antiracist teaching was represented, as well as the mode and media chosen for instruction and learning. As well, multimodality brought a crucial aspect of knowledge construction, making the form of representation integral to meaning making and learning—the ways in which something is represented shape both what is to be learned, that is, the curriculum content, and how it is to be learned (Jewitt, 2008).

Examples of multimodality in the implementation of the *Power Unit* lessons included: (a) multiple and varied analyses of conscious Hip Hop (meaning Hip Hop lyrics that challenge dominant culture), (b) viewing and discussing of films with racialized

content and themes including afrocentricity and the struggles of working class people, (c) interactions and participation with guest speakers, and (d) frequent chances for students to present new understandings in the form of art, song, performance, or other mediums that spotlighted students' strengths and linguistic flexibilities.

In order to avoid being "too Black Power" (Teacher Interview, Nov. 8, 2015) in his teaching, Mr. François chose to teach about race and racism by selecting texts created by a variety of authors and artists, whose themes highlighted power and potential for change. In addition to centering talk around these power-related themes, Mr. François valued and used multimodal instruction—his choices to prioritize exposure to music daily, what he valued and counted as texts, as well as the multimodal learning tasks for students; all of which appeared to support students' racial literacy learning. His talk, selected texts, and multimodal teaching are all parts of the pedagogical strategies and tools of the implementation process. The classroom event below also supports this finding.

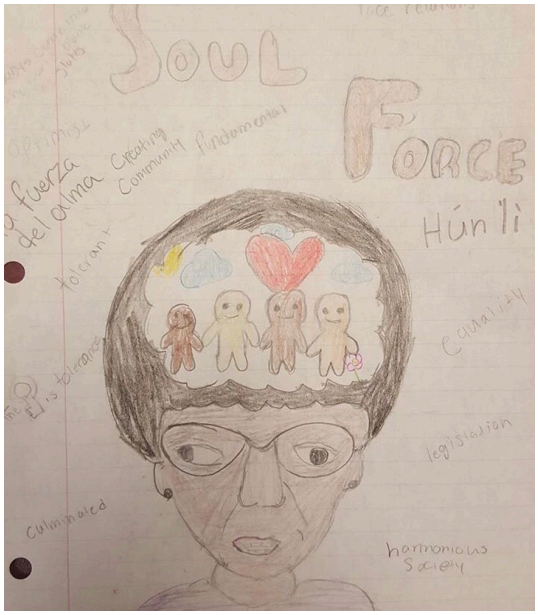
I turn to a classroom teaching moment around Barbara Jordan's speech at the 1992 Democratic National Convention. Mr. François gave a brief overview of Jordan's role as the first Black and out lesbian woman voted into congress (Classroom Observation, February 4, 2016), wanting to inspire change through a hope of acceptance, with a vision of all people joined together, no matter their differences. The most notable line was, "what we need now is soul force—the efforts of people working on a small scale to build a truly tolerant, harmonious society" (Jordan, 1992, p. 704). A prominent theme in Jordan's speech centered on inviting Americans to become more accepting of

people regardless of racial or religious affiliation. Mr. Francois paired this reading and analysis with a pre-released version of a collaborative track featuring eight emcees called *Soul Force* (Third Root, 2016). Part of the lyrics of that song included:

> Let's not put the cart before the horse / there's an order to the ops that the cops can't endorse yet / let the collective super-nature take its whole course / step by step, Barbara Jordan called it soul force / so if I can't change the world I can change mine / so we could change minds / multiply in trying times / instead of watching time fly / Lord keep my circle tight in the sweet by and by (Third Root, *LIBERTAD,* 2016)

During the course of the lesson, students engaged in various multimodal activities. Mr. François invited students to create artwork around Jordan's message; simultaneously as students drew, some students re-read Jordan's speech, some discussed themes of power at their table groups, and others listened to *Soul Force*. The following drawing represents a sample of student learning that day.

Figure 5.4. *Student work around All Together Now (February 4, 2016)*



The invitation to explore sound and visual modes to make meaning around the theme of power shows that multimodality functions as a tool to teach and learn about racial literacy (implementation finding 2). Multimodality worked to support student engagement with texts and topics to prompt discussion, and connect themes about race and racism across contexts in which students read and composed.

The Role of Dialogue and Multimodality

One afternoon (March 3, 2016), I observed the class discussing the poem *If We Must Die* (McKay, 1919), which famously begins, "If we must die, let it not be like hogs, Hunted and penned in an inglorious spot, while round us bark the mad and hungry dogs, making their mock at our accursed lot." Before inviting students to read the poem, Mr. François projected the famous line of Julius Caesar: "Cowards die many times before their deaths; The valiant never taste of death but once" (Shakespeare, 1942, p. 377). This was followed by an invitation to listen to the beginning of Tupac's iconic Hip Hop ballad,

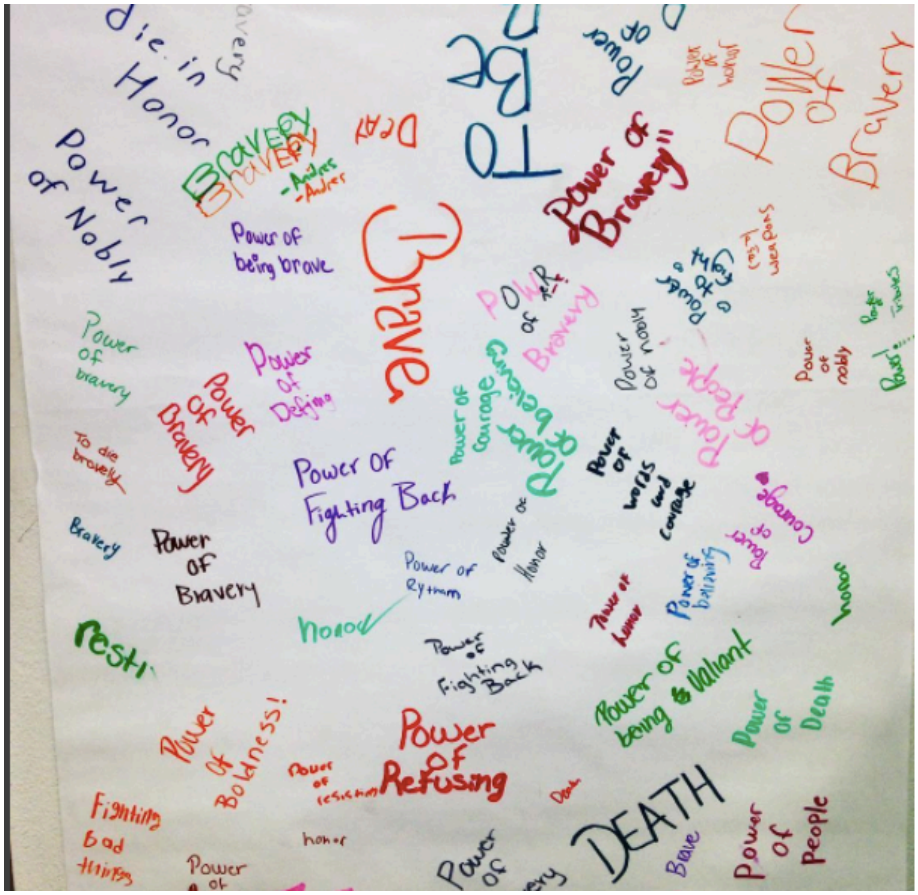
Me Against the World (Shakur, 1995) as a whole class. Valuing the work by a poet expressing his vision of the world around him, Mr. François emphasized counter-narrative, not only as a concept, but also as a teaching and learning tool (implementation finding 4.c). Racial literacy teaching practices are beneficial to the implementation of an antiracist reading and writing curriculum included examining counter-narratives. This meant re-orienting perspectives with the use of conscious Hip Hop as literature, not as a path to literature. Mr. François aimed to connect the themes of counter-narrative of McKay's poem, *If We Must Die,* Shakur's *Me Against the World*, and portions of Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* ("Cowards die many times before their deaths; The valiant never taste of death but once" Shakespeare, 1942, p. 127).

Mr. François chose to teach about the power of resistance and counter-narrative with this McKay poem as it represents a resistance to Jim Crow policies and a plea for African Americans to persist even though they are "pressed to the wall, dying, but – fighting back!" (McKay, 1919, p. 11). However, as Mr. François taught this, he intentionally gave minimal historic or political context, but played the song, *Glory* (Common & Legend, 2014) in the background while students read and then responded. "Y'all, I don't want to over burden this already heavy poem. We just need to let it breath on its own" (Classroom Observations, March 3, 2016). Instead of inundating his students with talking about and describing his own interpretations, Mr. François aimed to foster curiosity and collaborative sense-making and comprehension of the text. Demonstrating the key pedagogical element of dialogue in a multitude of forms in the implementation of this antiracist curriculum, after students read the poem silently to themselves, it was then

read aloud by a student volunteer. After having time to discuss the piece at their table groups, the class was then prompted to summarize and respond to each other. Some students used dictionaries, other students asked each other for help translating English words to Spanish words, some students used Google Translate.

After taking turns sharing their interpretations table by table, Mr. François asked each student to make an individual contribution. Onto a large shared poster, students were invited to jot down what they believed to be the most important type of power that came across in the poem. The image below is how the poster appeared upon completion:

Figure 5.5. *Types of power in* If We Must Die*, collaborative student assignment*


Die in Honor
Power of Nobly
Power of being brave
Power of Bravery"
Power of Bravery
Power of Fighting Back
Power of Refusing
Power of Boldness!
Power of Bravery
Power of Rythm
Power of Fighting Back
Power of being Valiant
Power of Death
Power of People
DEATH
Power of Courage
Power of Destiny
Power of Bravery
Power of Bravery
Power of Bravery

All student-generated concepts in that learning moment: The *power of fighting back*, the *power of refusing* or *resisting*, the power of *people*, the power of *bravery*. The idea of dialogicality can be useful for understanding participation in this classroom space in which various modes were combined to create invitations to multiple meanings. Teaching with poetry, poster making tools, and conscious Hip Hop such as iconic pieces like Tupac's *Me Against the World* with its counter-narrative motifs afforded possibilities for communication and meaning representation with more varied multimodal resources (e.g., images, symbols, and sounds) than oral or written communication (Kress, 2003; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001; Rowsell, 2013). Adding a layer of meaning to the intended message, each mode, like each utterance, contributes to creating an additional possibility for response. The types of power gleaned by students reflect a growth in racial literacy knowledge and an understanding the tools people have to contest racism. "This is so beautiful to me. It shows me y'all get it," said Mr. François to his students (Classroom Observation, March 3, 2016).

Teacher Learning and Response

The following section addresses the question regarding the effects of implementing an antiracist reading and writing curriculum on teacher learning (finding five). Mr. François practiced his agency in moving beyond what Zembylas (2003) called "dogmatic conceptions of identity" (p. 108) that typically limits how teachers identify themselves to social positioning. As discussed in Chapter Two, I analyzed data using a perspective that challenges the assumption of a singular *teacher-self* or an essential *teacher identity* hidden beneath the surface of teachers' experiences, an assumption

evident in popular cultural myths about teaching such as the idea that the teacher is the expert or the disciplinarian (Zembylas, 2003). Rather, I aimed to explore the "messy meanings of teacher identity" (Zembylas, 2003, p. 109) as it is created and re-created through exchanges, performances, and daily negotiations within a school culture that privileges emotional self-discipline and autonomy. For example, Black male middle school teachers are expected to be "mentors" or "disciplinarians." Teacher identity and teacher growth is not an established, constant component that develops in an orderly way, but something that is established through power relations in the classroom and in their communities. In the case of Mr. François, teaching this antiracist reading and writing curriculum appeared to impact him in two ways: (a) Heightened racial literacy knowledge, and (b) expanded interest around curriculum design.

Teacher's Racial Literacy Knowledge Enhanced

Mr. François deepened his knowledge and understanding of racial literacy as a consequence of implementing an antiracist reading and writing curriculum. Expressing opinions and debating issues connected to racism such as race as a social construct and *racecraft*, the practice and ideology out of which the idea of *race* emerges (Fields & Fields, 2012; Mahiri, 2017). These were debates Mr. François already engaged in on varying levels before coming into this project. As previously discussed in Chapter Four, in addition to reading and writing around issues of race and racism in public ways, he challenged himself to grow further by applying and being accepted to a prestigious educational leadership master's program (Personal Correspondence, May 10, 2015). Also elaborated on in the previous chapter, Mr. François' racialized and gendered identity

functioned as a tool to empower and position himself as a knowledgeable teacher with the political activist experiences of a conscious Hip Hop artist. Prior to the teaching of the antiracist reading and writing curriculum, his understanding of racial literacy reflected a need to expose the social construct of race and disrupt the systemic racism in textbooks and in the official curriculum.

When asked to consider the meaning of racial literacy prior to the implementation of the *Power Unit*, Mr. François reflected, "I just think of a lens through which you read things and it doesn't have to be through your own either" (Teacher Interview, November 28, 2015). Connecting the navigation of systemic racism to double consciousness (DuBois, 1897) was another way Mr. François made sense of racial literacy at the beginning of our work together.

> Racial literacy seems like it's connected to double consciousness. As a Black southern man I have to be able to read things through a racial lens as everything is being read through a racial lens for me anyway. So just to be socially and politically aware of the world I live in requires looking through that lens, because that's the world I live in. (Teacher Interview, November 28, 2015)

Mr. François took a pragmatic stance that helped him mitigate racialized forms of oppression in our society, for Black and Latino men in particular. After implementing the *Power Unit*, Mr. François' perspective on racial literacy appeared more nuanced. While his take on racial literacy did not entirely change, four months after the completion of the study, he acknowledged a shift in his understanding as he reflected on antiracist teaching as it related to what he wanted students to learn. He confessed that his future racial

literacy instruction was likely to be more sustained and strategic (Skerrett, 2011) in upcoming classroom curriculum. As we planned our NCTE conference co-presentation, almost a year after the first time I interviewed him around racial literacy, Mr. François re-constructed a meaning he deemed synonymous with racial literacy - "the literacy of racism" (Personal Correspondence, November 19, 2016). Compared to the conversations we had the previous year, he willingly identified and discussed the purposes of racial literacy with more certainty. Preceding our NCTE presentation, Mr. François reflected,

> Racial literacy, as I [now] understand it, is more like the literacy of racism, the reading, the writing, the discussing of racism, in the past, and in the present. It's not pleasant. And if we're not careful, we can come off as racist, which is ironic, but true. It's about knowing the right words to use, and knowing the real stories, and knowing how to talk back to White supremacy in a way that doesn't make you just as racist as you talk back to that White supremacy. (Personal Correspondence, November 19, 2016)

This description Mr. François appropriates of racial literacy included discussing both historic and contemporary forms of racism and other forms of oppression. Due to implementing this antiracist literacy writing and reading curriculum, Mr. François persisted in growing the racial literacy skills of his current and future students, as well as continued to work at expanding his own racial literacy knowledge. However, it took this teacher extensive time and numerous conversations for him to share his shifts in thinking in vulnerable ways.

The last time Mr. François approached curriculum during this study it was to teach his new class of seventh-graders. His aim in planning was stated as, "my responsibility is to disrupt settler colonial, monolingual, anti-immigrant patriarchy using whatever texts I can get my hands on." He taught curriculum in a way that expressed pro-Black, pro-Latino, pro-immigrant views and voices by selecting literature, perspectives, and solutions to life's most persistent questions. Using gathered pieces of un-official literacy and multimodal knowledge spread in the classroom, he found racial literacy knowledge expanding not only curriculum planning, but also into helping teachers and students question their epistemological assumptions about the purposes of teaching and learning literacy.

Teacher interest in curriculum design enhanced. Mr. François concretized the importance of antiracist teaching as a necessity with a group of veteran teachers he had met for the first time. During a professional development workshop for teachers, he openly stated to the group, "Whether it's Trump's regime, or 1947, they are on the losing end of a racist, xenophobic society. We have to meet this head on." (Mr. François, August 18, 2016).

During our last interview, Mr. François explained that his self-awareness shifted from identifying as a novice teacher to identifying as curriculum designer:

> The Power Unit made me feel like a curriculum guy, which is great. Maybe that's part of it. Maybe January to June [*the full span of The Power Unit*] helped me start feeling like a curriculum guy. It came up a lot. And not just me talking to

you. I would go test it out. I would talk to Mr. Davis, I'm saying this as a curriculum guy, yeah! A curriculum guy. (Teacher Interview, June 6, 2016)

Student Response

The following section addresses the question of the effects of implementing an antiracist reading and writing curriculum on students. The various kinds of observable student learning can be categorized as (a) self-reported gains in conventional reading and writing skills, (b) engagement in activist ways of reading and writing, (c) identification, understanding, and questioning of the nature of injustice and oppression with references to themes in the *Power Unit*, (d) writing about various forms of oppression, particularly racism in the U.S., in various relevant contexts, (e) perceiving themselves as more aware of power structures and attributing their learning to the *Power Unit*, and finally (f) learning language new to them to label, analyze, and develop critical perspectives on historic and ongoing forms of oppression such as racism and xenophobia.

Learning to Analyze Texts and Events Through the Lens of Power

In the process of reflecting around what the students learned, the teacher reported a win, or a victory in his measure. His belief that students would continue analyzing their world/texts in terms of power dynamics; bridged across local and state history, as well as using power a discursive tool or mode of discussion:

> We did this particular thing, and it resulted in this particular view. So yeah, we kept looking at different types of power. (pause) And at some point, I can guarantee you that, say, Jarrell is going to look at things that way. I don't know how, or when, or what, but he'll keep looking at things that way. Or even

> Desmond. And I'm just naming people off the top of my head. There will be people who continue to analyze things in terms of power; which is really important, which carried through to the Texas History and all that. It became a way that we can discuss stuff. And I think *that's* a big deal. I think, in many ways, *that* was the victory. (Teacher Interview, June 6, 2016)

Mr. François' teaching practices allowed students to name, analyze and develop deeper understandings about race, racism and other forms of oppression. As the teacher reflected on implementing an anti-racist literacy curriculum, he referred to the ways he believed even the most woke (Seales, 2018) students had shifted in the way they understood the world. Woke, a complex concept with a textured history, means being aware and being conscious of what needs to be changed and challenged in our social sphere to create equality and to end discrimination (Seales, 2018). Mr. François expressed his opinion that students developed a racial literacy perspective. His reflection on students' responses during the *Power Unit* came down to reading the world or comprehending, analyzing, critiquing, discussing texts in terms of power or in terms of looking for power dynamics.

Students' Reported Improvement and Growth

Analyses of student responses on survey and interview questionnaires revealed self-perceptions of improvement of their racial literacy. Many students acquired not only a new racial literacy discourse (i.e. 'How do you self-identify?' 'What language do you prefer to speak?'), but also more contemporary language skills in the areas of writing, reading, listening, and comprehension practice. While, yes, the racial literacy of students developed in the practice of antiracist literacy learning (such as we will see with a

student, Ronalda, and her flag-making) this curriculum appeared to also enhance students' self-efficacy and agency in identifying, analyzing, and developing responses to racialized phenomenon, while simultaneously increasing students' acquisition of official school curriculum's more traditionally defined academic literacy skills.

The *Power Unit* curriculum consequently led to teaching and learning, which involved students becoming aware of and more accustomed to the notion of self-empowerment. The graffiti poster, *If We Must Die*, functions as an example of two key findings. First, it reflects the portion of implementation finding 3b, which states that students were able to engage in activist ways of reading and writing, including writing about various forms of oppression, which appeared to also imply that antiracist literacy instruction can aid in the development and growth of students' self-efficacy and agency.

Writing growth connected to racial literacy instruction in the *Power Unit.*

The student data in this section came from the student survey about their writing experiences during the *Power Unit*. By the end of the year, 55 out of 60 students (91%) came away with self-perceptions that they had improved as writers across the course of the study and articulated confidence that their writing would improve in the future as shown in the Student Survey (May 6, 2016). "I began writing way better and I know I'll get even better next year" (Gage); "My writing will be even better in the future, my writing will improve. So I say my writing will just get better" (Tamari); Students also reported growth and goals as writers such as, "I write on my own now" (Gabi); and "I will try to write everyday" (Michelle). Furthermore, students expressed pride in their independent writing projects: "The Rift is one of my most worked-on comics and I'm so

proud of it" (Josiah). Several students declared desires to pursue writing professionally as Macy reported, "Well, I want to be a writer when I grow up. I want to write my own stories about every idea or dream I have." Others experienced a complete 'turn-around' in their writing lives. "I feel good about myself and my writing," reported Stefan, who began the year as a hesitant writer.

Teaching and learning throughout the *Power Unit* impacted the students in terms of increased levels of confidence in their academic writing abilities. 93% of those 60 students who returned their Writing Surveys at the end of the year were able to name a piece of their own writing that they believed was exceptional or outstanding. Students had no apparent ulterior motive to naming a piece of their writing they thought was excellent or predicting that their writing would get better. In designing these end of the year surveys, I tried structuring the questions using open-ended prompts only. As an example, one question read, "Now that we've completed the *Power Unit*, how do you predict your writing might move forward?" Almost all students were able to identify some type of positive future for their writing, and made predictions of improvement in their writing using their own words: "My writing might actually move onward, to the point where I become an author" (Ashley); "I think I might just get better and better" (Jesús); "I bet my writing will impact other people" (Michelle); "I just know I'll keep improving" (Gerardo); and "I will definitely keep writing more" (Jocelyn). Again, these responses exemplify a majority of students' self-reporting.

Overall, 98 % (n=60) of students reported that they recognized improvement in their writing abilities. These results about students' overall improved confidence,

abilities, and identities as writers showed that students had experienced an entire year's worth of writing instruction culminating with writing within the *Power Unit*. Students reflected their most outstanding writing piece and expressed their confidence: "My most excellent piece of writing was the persuasive essay I wrote on why education is important in life, I wish the whole world would read it" (Ashley); and "I wrote an inspirational essay called *Never Give Up* and I think it's the best thing I've ever written" (Morgan). Across Mr. François' classes, 59 students (99%) identified as writers and 58 students (98%) felt positive, hopeful, or focused "about what they write" by the end of the year.

When asked if or how their writing had changed overall since the *Power Unit*, students' responses varied across a wide spectrum of ways they saw shifts: "My topics, they're more serious" (Maria); "I structure my writing better now" (Desmond); "Now I know it's really important to express yourself" (Angelica); "I learned how to really show my thinking" (Issa); "At the start of the year, I didn't share my feelings, but now, it's like I have to write my feelings" (Eduardo); "Finally, my stories got juice" (Celine); "I've changed in my thinking, so my writing has just naturally evolved" (Trinity); and "Before, my stories weren't that great, but now they are" (Ayesha).

On the other hand, there emerged multiple self-reports of improvements in more conventional writing skills such as in spelling, handwriting, grammar, and vocabulary as students indicated: "Before I didn't have a strong thesis and details, but now I know how to find and write them" (Emiliano); "I'm proud of my handwriting, and how much better it's gotten" (Felicia); and "My thesis writing and my expository writing have improved" (Lavon). Several students alluded to syntactical and structural aspects of writing: "I

learned how to organize my writing through the expository essays" (Ashley); "I learned that [in expository essays] you always start with a thesis and end with a remixed thesis" (Alissa); "I learned that I have to put the thesis statement in the first paragraph and that I need to explain each body paragraph" (Esme); "I learned to write some good main ideas" (Nico); and "I learned that having a thesis can help you write a whole summary" (Irma). These examples support the fifth finding, which spotlights how students' acquisition of traditionally defined academic literacy skills were enhanced during the *Power Unit*.

Reading growth connected to racial literacy focus in the *Power Unit.* When asked about their reading plans and projections, 91% (n=60) of students had clear goals for their reading agendas. For example, students made assertions in the End of the Year Survey: "I will read even more than I do now. I will read Manga books, rock and heavy metal books, creepy pasta, anything that I think is cool" (Emilio); "I am a way better reader than I thought, so I can read whatever I want" (Gilberto); "I want to read the Bible, the full Bible. I couldn't read it before because there were bigger words, but now I can" (Giselle); "I'm going to read more mysteries and I can improve my reading a lot if I just try" (Esmé). Several students even pointed to the connections between what we read and writing, for example, Michelle reported, "People need to read to get inspiration to write." Other students reported as follows: "I will be reading CR7 books and more soccer websites" (Rudy); "I want to read more about the history of the 1800's and 1900's" (Andrés); "Honestly, I'm planning on reading more books and information online about how to take care of animals" (Gerardo).

When asked what they learned about themselves as readers, a little over 90% of all the students reported that they learned some variety of new strategies and/or that they were a 'better reader'. Perhaps more importantly, many students reported on learning about the pleasures of reading, for instance, Katrina reported, "I learned that you can get lost in a book."

Similarly, students self-reported significant shifts in their reading abilities. This, too, reflects finding three, which spotlights how while the racial literacy of students developed in the practice of antiracist literacy learning and self-efficacy, it also enhanced students' acquisition of official school curriculum's more traditionally defined academic literacy skills. Student surveys asked, "What did you learn about yourself as a reader?" I provided this open-ended question in order to tap into how students may have noticed any shifts in their reading. Most students (92%) had specific and personal responses: "I learned how to read out loud without stuttering" (Victor); "I learned more reading skills" (Lucy); "I realized I can't concentrate on my reading when people around me are talking" (Yvette); "I am a better reader than I thought" (Devonte); "I learned that I like to read" (Miguel); "I am better at reading when I can get into it" (Maria); "When I read books, then I get more ideas, but this year I see why I love books even more" (Raquel); "I learned that I can get lost in a book" (Michelle).

On the other hand, when asked how they saw themselves improving as readers as a result of the *Power Unit*, some students (85%) responded with more conventional approaches to reading progress, such as self-reports about increased SRI and Lexile scores. Student feedback on the academic literacy skills reflected pride around reading

comprehension. For instance, students reported the following: “I learned that my Lexile score is really high” (Logan); “My Lexile score has definitely improved” (Antonio); “I’m so proud of my Lexile score now” (Reina); “I improved my SRI score, I had a low score last year” (Julio); “My SRI score is awesome now” (Ricardo). Other more conventional reading-related comprehension self-reports included: “I learned that when you’re reading something long, it’s helpful to summarize each paragraph” (Hector); “I have seriously improved my reading, which was already great, but now I can read at an even higher level than before” (Jessica); “I can read a lot more now” (Anthony); and “I learned that I’m a fast reader” (Tana). Presumably, the discourse of *higher level*, *faster*, *more* used by students might reflect the campus and district-level focus on raising conventional academic literacies. Overall, students began the year with relatively realistic and relevant notions of the purposes of reading and writing.

Expanding racial discourse. As implementation finding 3a states, students expanded their racial literacy discourse and learned language new to them in order to name, analyze, and develop antiracist perspectives on historic and ongoing forms of oppression and power structures. Madison’s last interview exemplifies how students can identify, understand, and question the nature of injustice and oppression and referred to themes of power the unit. “There’s a lot of racism in America, and in the world, so obviously antiracism is important” (Student Interview, April 29, 2016). When students were asked directly about the *Power Unit* in the Student Survey, they provided candid responses that reflected various understandings of racial literacy. Andre wrote, “I learned that if you’re Black or Brown in this country, you’re still not considered equal to others.

Like, if I kill an officer, I go to jail for life, but if an officer kills me, he would get set free." Greg reflected, "If we [Black and Latino people] didn't have the power to vote, we would still be considered a disgrace." Yet, another student, Macy, who was one of two white students, reflected, "I learned that people, to this day, are racist." Alissa also reported, "Racism is everywhere. And just because we don't see it as much now, it still happens. Racism hurts people and makes them feel like they don't matter. And that's traumatizing." Rico thought, "I believe racism has lessened somewhat throughout history, but it's also always there just in different forms."

Other students reflected on lessons learned from the *Power Unit*: "The power of Black children and youth changed the course of U.S. history, because they never gave up" (Yolanda); and "Teamwork between African Americans and whites changed everything, like in the march from Selma. It eventually gave African Americans the right to vote in peace" (Ray).

Engaging in activist reading and writing. As implementation finding 3b states, students were able to engage in activist ways of reading and writing, including writing about various forms of oppression, particularly racism in the U.S., both in the focal classroom and other school and social contexts. Students engaged in ways of reading and writing that reflected activist agendas. Rianna's essay exemplifies identified, understood, and questioned the nature of injustice and oppression and referred to themes of the power unit. Students wrote about various abuses of power, particularly around homophobia in the U.S. context. "Why shouldn't gay people get married? Who made up that ridiculous law?" (April 2, 2016). Data from student questionnaires revealed that most students

(n=60; 93%) of students in Mr. François' class emerged with desires to effect change and deeper understandings of how to disrupt racism. For example, Miranda reported in the Student Survey, "The power we have as young people outweighs the power of all the racists in the world." Brianna also reflected in the survey, "Our power is in opposition with the crazy evil in our country, but we will win as our people have before us." The *Power Unit* apparently impacted the way a majority of the students (n=60; 93%) self-identified and identified their responsibilities. One of the most important kinds of power, according to many students, was "the power to believe in yourself" (Andrés). While others claimed that writing took precedence, "writing to fight for what's right is very powerful because you can write something important that will change someone's mind" (Beatrice).

Ronalda's Mexican Flags: A Multimodal Example of Racial Literacy Growth as Connected to Multiliteracies and Antiracist Teaching

I end this section on student response and learning with an elaborated case of one student. A notable shift occurred with a particular student, Ronalda, evidenced particularly during the last week of the school year (the week of June 2nd, 2016). Ronalda (she chose this pseudonym to reflects her admiration of a popular and controversial soccer icon, Cristiano Ronaldo) was commonly referred to as a high achieving student athlete (Conversations with teacher, October 2, 2015; January 12, 2016; March 27, 2016). While there was some minor build up in her thinking and attitudes leading to what she did that week, for the most part throughout the school year, both Mr. François and I reflected on her academic determination and competitiveness in the classroom, as well as

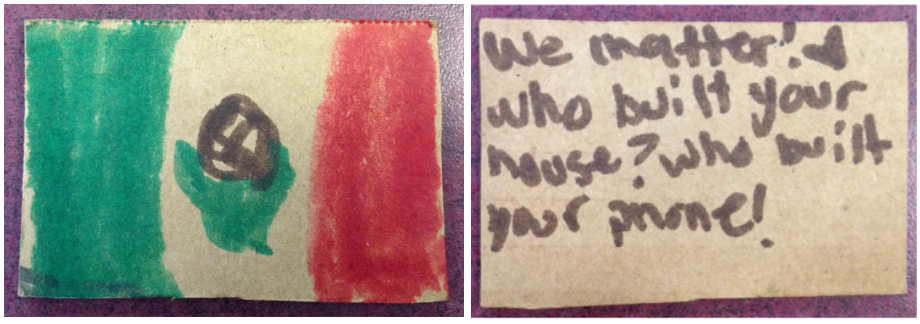
her focus and leadership on every varsity team Contender Middle School offered to young women (Field Notes, October 2, 2015; January 12, 2016; March 27, 2016). A district-level *All-Star Athlete* and campus-level *Most Valuable Player* award-winner, Ronalda proudly maintained her status as a High Honor Roll student at each grading period. An analysis of her WRLS writer's notebook and writing portfolio shows that from September of 2015 to May of 2016, when she was given the option to choose her own topics, Ronalda either wrote about 1) the importance of playing various sports in her lifetime, or 2) her identity connected to the importance of diligence and perseverance to her academic success. For the end-of-the-year class writing anthology, students were invited to self-select a composition they were most proud of; Ronalda selected an essay she wrote and revised titled "Never Give Up." For her culminating WRLS magazine final project Ronalda composed an essay titled "Sports in My Life" and spotlighted themes of grit and perseverance. Ronalda was also fluent in her first language, Spanish, and often took it upon herself to translate instructions to her table group peers (Classroom observations & field notes, January 7, 2016; February 13, 2016; March 3, 2016; May 25, 2016). Unlike some of her other bilingual peers who wrote poems about why they self-identified as a 'proud Mexicana' (student *I Am* poem, September 12, 2015) or a 'beautiful Latina' (student *I Am* poem, September 14, 2015), Ronalda consistently remained distinctly a-political and seemingly un-interested in developing her own understanding of racial literacy.

As I analyzed data around Ronalda's reactions and behaviors during the learning events in the *Power Unit* I described above (such as the discussion about local police

brutality) to give a sense of her level of engagement in learning and an insight into her developing racial literacies, I found nothing outstanding. Ronalda remained on the sidelines of most discussions; most often busy translating for her emergent bilingual table group peers. Ronalda's written work and participation appeared typical. At least, that is what Mr. François and I believed until the last week of school. The incident that occurred with her, which I describe below, occurred over a two-day span on the last week of school (June 2-3, 2016).

I claim racial literacy growth in the case of this one exemplary (by conventional educational standards) student, Ronalda, who, up until the end of the school year, displayed little interest in engaging with the concepts involved in the *Power Unit* and about her emergent racial literacy. During the last week of her seventh grade, (two days after the antiracist unit formally concluded), Ronalda made and dispersed 35 business-sized cardboard Mexican 'flags' (note: I use the term flag loosely here. These were in fact small cardboard replicas of what a flag might look like). In this student's case, the *Power Unit* transferred as a way to negotiate and display her own racial literacy understanding.

Figure 5.6. *Ronalda's flags; Front and back (2 inches x 2 inches, June 2, 2016)*



The last Friday with Mr. François' class, the last week of the school year, I walked into his classroom and noticed a trail of these business card sized cardboard Mexican flags around Ronalda's *table group;* she was sitting at her desk, concentrating on making another Mexican flag (Field Notes, June 2, 2016). Her green and red markers almost depleted of ink, she included the detail of a small eagle and snake crest in the center and (on the back, she wrote: "We matter! [Heart shape] Who built your house? Who built your phone" (Field Notes, June 2, 2016, Figure 5.5).

Ronalda's racial literacy development manifested in an unforeseen way, in an unexpected context outside of Mr. François' classroom, during a time of year when most students displayed disengaged behaviors. Mr. Davis, Ronalda's AVID teacher, assigned a group project requiring each team to design and build a space ship model for an imagined *Future World* during the last week of school. Each teacher-assigned team was asked to build a miniature cardboard replica of a spaceship designed for an imagined future, including descriptions and explanations detailing the functions of all the parts. Mr. Davis assigned Ronalda to be part of a group which included two other Latinas – Arianna, a student who self-identified as Mexican American, Zaneta, a student who self-identified as Mexican – and one African American student – Tamika, who self-identified as Black. During an interview the week after the school year officially ended, Ronalda explained it in the interview as she remembered:

> So my teammates and I finished our spaceship and then, you know how, like, when Neil Armstrong went to the moon and he put the U.S.A. flag on the moon? Well, I wanted to put the Mexican flag on our spaceship so that everyone can

> know that us Mexicans were there. But, Arianna was like, "What? That's dumb!" I was like, "We're putting a Mexican flag on there because we have to show who was here, we have to represent." And Arianna was all mad, like, "Well, I don't represent Mexico."

Ronalda's racial literacy discursive skills (i.e. discourse of 'we have to show who was here, we have to represent') reflected an evolved understanding of and critique of systemic racism. Ronalda was also, publicly, in the context of another classroom, for, what appeared to be, the first time attempting to claim an identity as a political act, a human right, and experiencing it as a complex process (Dei, 1999). Ronalda continued:

> But Zaneta was with me and so, when AVID class was over and the bell rang and Zaneta and I made a plan. We said that after they [Arianna and Tamika] leave, we're going to act like we're walking to class, then, we're going to come back to class and we were going to tape it. And so we decided to do that. We wanted to make sure to put a lot of tape, so that if they rip it off it could destroy the whole thing. That's what our plan was, but it didn't turn out like that. Mr. Davis said, "Go to class." So we finished and finally left, but it took a minute. That's why were late to Mr. François' class.

Other students witnessed the incident and Mr. Davis, the AVID teacher, specifically sought me out to report his recollection of what happened, as he and I had discussed racial literacy (Sealey-Ruiz & Greene, 2015) in previous conversations. According to Mr. Davis, he "felt an urgent need" (hallway conversation with Mr. Davis, June 4, 2016) to tell Mr. François and I what he observed with Ronalda's behavior and shift in his class

that last week of school. Mr. Davis confessed he felt "shocked" (Conversation with Mr. Davis, June 4, 2016), as he had not noticed anything similar from Ronalda at any point throughout the rest of the year.

Mr. Davis explained to me the project he assigned and initial observations about the team of Tamika, Arianna, Zaneta and the high-achieving Ronalda. Mr. Davis described why he decided to intervene:

> So there was a physical struggle not to put the flag on the spaceship. The issue was that Ronalda was trying to put the original Mexican flag on the ship and Tamika would not allow it. It seemed like they were about to tear the whole thing apart. And I said, "Y'all created a really cool space-ship, please don't tear it apart." And so just then the bell rang. Tamika and Arianna left, and I took it from Ronalda and Zaneta. I was like, "You're going to break it, give it to me, I'm going to put it up on the shelf," and she got it off the shelf and was like, "Come on Zaneta, I found some tape, I'm doing this!" I was like, "Y'all are *not* doing this. Y'all are gonna be late to *class* and I'm *not* writing you a note." But she wouldn't leave until she got it taped on there. You should have seen her. The level of commitment to seeing the thing through was unbelievable, surprising, even. Ronalda was making the argument that "I'm Mexican, and I built this, and also, Mexicans build all of your homes, and so, why are we arguing? We're going to put this Mexican flag on it." To me, that's what she seemed to be saying. Like, "I, a Mexican, made this, and my people made this, just like all the homes you live in were built by Mexicans, so I don't even know why we're having this

> conversation about whether or not we should put this Mexican flag on this spaceship; I mean, obviously we should. There should be Mexican flags on all of your houses because they were all built by Mexicans, basically." She seemed exasperated, and seemed to feel that everyone should agree with her and was upset that we weren't making the connections that were obviously there. So it was fun to see that. (Interview, June 6, 2016)

As Mr. Davis attempted to tell his side of this story, he seemed stunned by what he called the "level of commitment" (Interview, June 6, 2016) to Ronalda's insistence on the flag as her new display of racial literacy knowledge. Ronalda's racial literacy understanding around Mexican labor issues and her insistence and determination on the symbolic representation of identity through her flag making, was a change Mr. Davis was not prepared to witness, "Especially not from her, especially not this late in the year. I mean, who does that?" (Interview, June 6, 2016)

Mr. Davis explained how the following day, the struggle over the flag proved unrelenting. He described Ronalda's sense of purpose:

> And then the next day it just continued! Ronalda and her team presented, so I thought it was all over. I was like, "Good, we're done with all that." But just after, Ronalda starts making, get this, more Mexican flags! Like, five or six more cardboard Mexican flags! I was like, "What are you going to do with those?" She wouldn't answer me. She had a plan, I don't know what the plan was, but she had a plan. I had never seen her like that. I didn't know if she was going to put them on everybody else's ship? Like, wait until everybody left and then just without

> their permission put the Mexican flags on there? I don't know what else she would have done with those. She had a cause. That's what she spent the rest of class doing, was making those Mexican flags. (Interview, June 6, 2016)

Ronalda's cause, this subversive multimodal flag maneuver, implies a type of civil protest, resistance, or even political agitation (Douglass, 1869; Staples, 2010). As scholarship indicates, Ronalda's racial literacy developed as she practiced an acquired set of skills such as speaking up about the xenophobia, racism, and anti-immigrant sentiments she found systemically present in her everyday life and in the racism of her local context (Ohito, 2016). Though this was not conventional academic writing or speaking, for her to make and share these Mexican flags allowed her a mode of probing the existence of racism and the upholding of the harmful effects of racial stereotypes (Bonilla-Silva, 1997; Dixon & Rosenbaum, 2004; Omi & Winant, 1986), particularly in regards to Mexican laborers locally. In considering racial literacy as a set of tools with which to move toward constructive conversations about race and antiracist action in schools (Rogers & Mosley, 2006; Sealey-Ruiz, 2012, 2013; Sealey-Ruiz & Greene, 2011; Skerrett, 2011), in practice, a student such as Ronalda, through this incident, examined, discussed, challenged, and took antiracist action in a tense learning situation where she felt, perhaps for the first time firsthand, aware of being involved in an act of racism. As another example of this, Ronalda critiqued, "Mexicans come to the U.S. to get a better life and to make their dreams come true, right? Well, *supposedly*, dreams come true here, supposedly" (Interview, June 8, 2016). With this reflection on the ideologies of meritocracy, Ronalda also identified her own antiracist understanding of the need for

critique of Euro-American dominance (Dei, 1996). She seemed to connect this new literacy to her learning during the *Power Unit*. Ronalda reflected,

> When I started doing all that with the flags, I told Zaneta, 'I'm going to fight for my rights.' And she asked me, 'Like how Mr. Francois taught us?' And I was like, 'Yeah, like that.' What I think I learned from that [the *Power Unit*] was not to be scared to show who you are in life and where you come from, because that really does matter. If they don't know where you come from, people are going to talk for you. (Interview, June 8, 2016)

Mr. Davis, appeared to observe the surface of what was perhaps for Ronalda a confrontation in which she felt responsible to give voice to the voiceless, to embody and symbolize the unrepresented. Ronalda elaborated with both pride and indignation:

> Then, next day was our presentation. We came into our AVID class, and I was kind of late, and Zaneta was with me too, and Arianna and Tamika were all huddled up around it, and there they were, taking off my Mexican flag! And I got in, and I was like, "What the hell are y'all going?" And they said, "We're taking off the Mexican flag!" And that's when Mr. Davis came in, at first, he tried to disagree with me too, he said, "Really, why do you need a Mexican flag?" I said, "I have to show who I represent." So it was Arianna, Tamika, me, and Zaneta standing in front of the class when we did our presentation and we did really badly, because we were in an argument, it was like "U.S.A. v. Mexico". So when we were about to present, I was like, "So the stars of the United States" and Arianna interrupted me and started saying stuff about Mexico and I was like,

> "Rude!" So anyway, as I was saying, "The stars of the United States are *supposed to* make our dreams come true but *they are not working*!" I got a big piece of cardboard, and then I wrote "Mexican" and I put it behind it and she pushed it, and it fell on the ground and then I put it back. And during my part I was like, "My part is going to be the part that represents Mexico." During my part of the space-ship presentation, I was like "We need a flag because we are trying to represent Mexico and they don't even know who we are or where we come from." After we were finished, Arianna grabbed the space-ship and took off the other Mexican flag I made! So you know what I did? I made more Mexican flags, and then I made more Mexican flags, and then, I started passing them out to people. And I gave one to Arianna and Tamika. As soon as they saw what it was, they threw it on the ground. (Interview, June 8, 2016)

One of the crucial concepts embedded in racial literacy growth is the notion of people opening and sustaining dialogue about racist acts they witness in school, or in communities, or at home (Gilroy, 1990). Another specific development of racial literacy, particularly for people of color, is to resist a victim stance (Gilroy, 1990), which is evident in Ronalda's case. For the first time since her teachers could recall, Ronalda was, by the end of the year, paying close attention to how power and the social construction of race converged as she identified and examined racial hierarchies at play, and then developed practices and tools to un-do that. Ronalda's flag making functioned as a multimodal tool to practically confront and help dismantle the racially unjust hierarchies that upheld racism against the racial group she identified with. She "gained admission to

particular [racially literate or "woke"] communities and opportunities through her development of insider skills and knowledges" (Leander & Boldt, 2012, p. 28). Ronalda's focus on a racialized discourse indexed an opposite position from her previous colorblind stance. Her recognition of how literacy and property rights are intertwined is another aspect of her racial literacy growth that exemplified an expanded racial literacy discourse. In keeping with finding three, Ronalda demonstrated she was able to name, analyze, and develop antiracist perspectives around ongoing forms of oppression. For example, ICE policies were prominent in this context at the time of data collection and continues to cause anxiety for many Latinos in the area. In a state that often shames and degraded Latinos into a monolith culture, one that is historically and contemporarily 'purchased, owned, and stolen' by white communities, 'owning' where you come from seems meaningful. For a student to name and claim their identity while resisting the oppression of racial profiling also seems important.

In regards to racial literacy growth in students as a consequence of learning during the *Power Unit*, I analyzed Ronalda's Mexican flag event with the understanding that students did not compartmentalize, limit, or contain their racial literacy learning to the English Language Arts/Humanities/WRLS classroom context. As Ronalda reflected during the last interview, her racial literacy development emerged as a wide-spread, systemic identity-awakening phenomenon. With her message through the flags, she wanted to remind anyone willing to listen that the hard labor of Mexican workers has been and continues to be grossly devalued and that this social and political invisibility pains her. Ronalda realized and then proceeded to teach others that this local racism also

functions at a much larger scale in U.S. society. By talking and designing about it, she intervened and disrupted this invisibility, as she stood up and spoke out on the issue, as if to say, "My community, my work is part and parcel of work that my people don't get any credit for." This seemed a significant conceptual leap for Ronalda in particular, as her work appeared to move from more individualistic writing topics (i.e. grit, determination, success, sports, good grades, etc.) to raising a community-based, antiracist issue (i.e. the flags as a collective recognition of the Mexican immigrant community's accomplishments).

Racial literacy can mature. As we see in the case of Ronalda, once students internalize and express in a mode they choose, the value and the power that their heritage represents, they will no longer accept and tolerate oppositional and color blind stances and perspectives that misrepresent them. By teaching the Power Unit in multimodal ways, Mr. François intended for racial literacy to develop. Ronalda's Mexican flags, her unique multimodal expression of racial literacy progress, sprouted at the end of the year, in another classroom, in a context detached from the antiracist literacy curriculum. She was taught about the history of the racism African Americans dismantled during the Civil Rights era, as she continued to witness racism against Latinos currently in the local environment. When she repeatedly wrote, "We matter" she seemed to be arguing that regardless of how disposable Latinos are painted in a historically and contemporarily White supremacist system, Latinos, and particularly Mexicans, do important work and ought be treated humanely. This display of racial literacy is not dissimilar to racial competence (Michael, 2015), meaning students have the skills and confidence to confront

racism at individual, group and systems levels, speak their mind while being open to feedback

Ronalda's display of flag making also reflects a type of antiracist understanding (Dei, 1996) of how racism is one of many intersecting forms of oppression. Her pointing to the national and cultural identity that the Mexican flag symbolizes and indexed is significant. The flag and the message accompanying it shows pride in the particularly difficult and in most cases dangerous work that Mexican day laborers suffer lack of choices and White supremacist aggression ranging from xenophobic 'Go back to Mexico' attacks to the more subtle acculturation of Mexican culture, yet disregard for Mexican families. This aggression or indifference that many Mexican day-laborers are subject to locally, functions in this context in two meaningful ways: (a) it reminds adolescent literacy researchers that xenophobia does not only present a tension in Ronalda's personal and local literacy learning, but that xenophobia also intersects with other forms of oppression such as racism, etc. (i.e. 'To Be a Mexican Man in Texas' and other identity texts); and (b) Ronalda's racial literacy shifted from politically detached to aware and agitated; she read texts by authors of color, and above all she was given multiple opportunities to make choices about her writing and presenting.

Ronalda's racial literacy manifested, grew wings, and sprouted horns during a real-life as well as academic life moment in which she felt compelled to speak her truth. In a unique mode, she expressed her solidarity for the oppressed and invisible 'Mexicans' mistreated in systematic racists and capitalist ways. On the one hand, teaching an antiracist literacy curriculum such as the *Power Unit* could be thought of as more likely

to impact African American and Latino students because their teacher who self-identifies as Black can address issues that students, and he, tolerate daily. On the other hand, we know that not all people of color navigate and conceptualize their racialized identities (Nasir, 2011) in one particular way. For example, Ronalda's initial perspective of her Latina identity seemed detached politically, as she saw racism being an issue of the past. This point of view then changed into a stance of critical consciousness and solidarity, one in which she wanted her peers to understand and respect the contemporary struggles that Mexicans and other Latinos in Texas undergo their collective cultural history, and the sociopolitical culture of their people (one that is abused and commodified). By writing "We matter" over and over, she created a voice to speak on behalf of those who go unnoticed.

Outcomes of Implementing an Antiracist Literacy Curriculum

Overall, this antiracist literacy curriculum played out in complex and multifaceted ways. While on several instructional levels, there was an expectation that racial literacies of students would be developed and transformed, the growth and development of academic literacy skills that were explicitly connected to the antiracist curriculum, as students themselves reported, is of great empirical importance to the literacy field. This finding appears to reflect the influence of the first finding discussed in chapter four, which points to the impact of teaching in this *outside the box yet inside the standards* approach.

In terms of the findings more closely connected to the practicalities of teaching the *Power Unit*, it appears hopeful for literacy educators who are already committed to

and accustomed to teaching in culturally responsive ways. Antiracist teaching is not merely a tool for teachers of color who self-identify as *woke* (Seales, 2018). The shifts that Mr. François made to his instructional practices were significant, but not impossibly difficult. His curriculum design accounted explicitly for integrating issues of race and racism into literacy learning, specifically reading and composition. Thus antiracist curriculum design and teaching is a unique, identifiable approach to literacy instruction. What also stands out about antiracist teaching is that it requires a great deal of vulnerable confidence in order for teachers to implement and sustain it; and to promote students' racial literacy learning.

Lastly, multimodal instructional strategies, including the reading and composition of multimodal texts, appear to support the teaching of antiracist literacy curriculum, foster racial literacy growth among both teachers and students, as well as encourage traditional literacy skill growth. As literacy scholars and teacher researchers proceed in contemplating how antiracist literacy curriculum might be designed and implemented successfully in the future, special attention should be given to multimodal practices and to continuing the conversation around pedagogies of multiliteracies.

Chapter 6: Discussions and Implications

INTRODUCTION

In chapters four and five, I described how a seventh-grade literacy teacher designed and implemented an antiracist curriculum. In this chapter, I revisit my research questions and findings and discuss the study's theoretical significance, implications for practice, and possibilities for future research.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND FINDINGS REVISITED

Through this study, I set out to understand the processes of co-designing and observing the teaching of an antiracist literacy curriculum. To further explore possibilities around that process, I asked the following questions: What is the process of designing an antiracist literacy curriculum? What knowledge, tools, and practices were brought to and emerged from designing this curriculum? What is involved in the process of a teacher implementing a reading and writing curriculum such as this? What are the effects of implementing such a curriculum on classroom interactions, on teacher learning, and on students?

I organized findings from this study into two central parts, antiracist curriculum design and racial literacy instruction (three design findings and five implementation findings). In chapter four, the study's design findings highlight a need for teachers to create antiracist units of study within the official curriculum; build such curriculum upon concepts related to race and racism about which they are knowledgeable; and engage in extensive, recursive, and reflective conversations with a similarly knowledgeable or more expert colleague or peer-researcher around relevant texts, tools, and practices. In Chapter

Five, claims I made regarding the implementation of this curriculum asserted that dialogue around racism is an essential conduit for racial literacy teaching and learning, multimodality functions as a tool for teaching and learning racial literacy, and students' self-perceived improvement of their racial literacy and their conventional reading and writing skills. Specific antiracist teaching practices that emerged included providing students a variety of differing texts addressing oppression across contexts, emphasizing counter-narrative as a teaching and learning tool, using discursive tools with which to name and analyze forms of oppression, and practicing vulnerable confidence in sharing personal experiences with oppression. Finally, teacher learning and change included heightened racial literacy knowledge and increased interest in curriculum design.

THEORETICAL SIGNIFICANCE

In this section, I discuss theoretical contributions gained from this study, including how teacher knowledge can be used to identify racial literacy concepts and support the development of antiracist curriculum, the powerful nature of peer-researcher collaboration and deliberation, and the significance of multimodality in teaching and learning racial literacy.

The Importance of Teachers' Existing Racial Knowledge

This study builds on a body of scholarship that captures the complex experiences of teachers enacting racial literacy instruction in secondary contexts (Epstien & Geist, 2015; King, 2016; Skerrett, 2011; Bolgatz, 2005). I argue that without centering the sophisticated racial literacy knowledge and insights that teachers bring with them, teachers would likely feel unprepared and doubtful about their ability to do this important

work. Furthermore, I suggest that teachers own racial knowledge can be centered in the making and enacting of racial literacy curriculum and instruction, so that the work can be as authentic, sustainable, and meaningful for them and their students. As I analyze my findings from this research, I would suggest teachers design antiracist literacy curriculum around a racial literacy concept or framework they are knowledgeable about, already familiar with, or are invested in. The findings related to what knowledge, tools, and practices where brought to designing this type of curriculum point to the effective nature of teachers developing their own frameworks of racial literacy by drawing on their existing personal, political, and professional racial knowledge and identities. As discussed in chapter four, that concept for Mr. François was power.

The Power of Peer-Researcher Collaboration

Just as I argue that teachers should design antiracist curriculum around a racial literacy concept they are knowledgeable about, I also argue for more research on antiracist curriculum completed with researcher and teacher collaborations co-designing curriculum. This study thus also contributes to scholarship that studies researchers and teachers as co-designers (Fowler-Amato & Warrington, 2017; Shawer, 2010; Skerrett & Bomer, 2011). Without extensive co-designing and co-planners who prioritize time to focus on racial literacy growth, this process may be too fragile or seem impossibly overwhelming to teachers. The process of designing and implementing an antiracist literacy curriculum ought to be collaborative with multiple sessions involving informal turn-taking, sharing of ideas and texts, co-analysis of instructional documents, and the co-construction of guiding questions. These symbiotic partnerships are vital to the planning

and teaching of an antiracist curriculum. The recursive and extensive process of co-planning can become practical, structured, standards-based, and feasible. Co-designing such curriculum also requires deliberate attention to the aims of antiracism in literacy education. The teacher in this case co-designed with me, a researcher, and a veteran teacher. Teachers, researchers, and other educators who commit to learning alongside each other can plan on enagging in reading and discussing critical race theory, racial literacy research, and antiracist practice to most effectively embark on this type of work.

Multimodality as a Theoretical Construct and Tool for Racial Literacy Instruction and Learning

The field of literacy widely agrees on the importance of multimodality's role in literacy learning. There exists a sizeable body of research around integrating multimodality into classroom teaching practices (Halliday,1985; Hobson, 2014; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006; Kress & Jewitt, 2003; Hodge & Kress, 1988). Multimodal expression comprised of multiple "modes" or communicative forms (i.e., digital texts, visual texts, spatial texts, musical texts, etc.) and diverse sign systems convey meanings recognized and understood by a social group. While several studies have analyzed the connection between multimodality and teaching critical literacies (Albers, Vasquez, & Harste, 2008; Callow, 2005; Harste, Leland, Grant, Chung, & Enyeart, 2007; Lewison, Leland, & Harste, 2008; Lewison & Heffernan, 2008; Luke & Freebody, 1999), thus far, literacy research specifically around antiracist teaching and racial literacy learning in particular has not yet uncovered the significant role of multimodality. This case study's finding about the power of multimodality in teaching and learning racial literacy makes a

scholarly contribution to literacy research. This finding around multimodality contributes to the significance of attending to various modes by which racial literacy can be learned and expanded (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1986; Collins, 2004; hooks, 2014).

IMPLICATIONS

In this section, I discuss implications of this study for classroom practice, teacher education and professional development, and educational policy.

Implications for Classroom Practice

Classrooms ought to be spaces for students to make sense of their intellectual identities and activate their agency in the face of racial injustices and other forms of oppression (Dutro et al., 2008; Epstein & Gist, 2015; Rogers & Mosley, 2006; Smith, 2016). Teachers have a responsibility and an opportunity to promote racial literacy (Rogers & Mosley, 2006; Twine, 2010) by creating curricular space in classrooms for genuine dialogue around race and racism. Considering the power of taking an antiracist stance, teachers of reading and writing should consider providing more regular opportunities for their students to "contextualize, extend, and make sense of" their learning about race and racism (Smith, 2016, p. 57) in the relative safety of a dialogic classroom environment.

For classrroom teachers, teaching current events alongside historic ones that foreground the realities of racism is more feasible than ever. Cases of racism, sexism, xenophobia, homophobia, linguisim, and other forms of oppression are prevalent in the news as national coverage of outspoken agitators has increased. A recent example of this

would be the controversy of Nike's advertisement promoting Colin Kaepernick's act of resistance. Teaching in a way that normalizes classroom dialogue around racism and models discussions outside of binary ('us versus them') division, could also look like reading and listening to narratives of protests against racial injustice and other cases of oppression that are accessible through various free public sources. Classroom teachers interested in continuing this type of work need not look far to find ways of connecting contemporary examples of civil disobedience or peaceful protest to historic moments presented in the official curriculum.

Further, literacy teachers should consider carving out as much instructional time as the official curriculum will allow for teaching and practicing composition around racism. Teachers could self-idenitfy as writers, invite student feedback on writing they share, and model their own writing processes alongside their students (Kittle, 2008). Teachers could also allow students the autonomy to self-identify (Atwell, 1984; Bomer & Bomer, 2001; Calkins, 2003), self-select topics and texts, and prioritize and normalize time to write.

Based in the finding of the teacher's success in teaching racial literacies while attending to the official curiculum, I would encourage classroom teachers to stay inside the lines of the assigned curriculum and to embed antiracist units within the confines of state, district, and campus curricular expectations. Politically conscious educators and critical literacy teachers should acknowledge and continuously work towards teaching for antiracist purposes as it is likely to lead to teacher learning and an evolution of personal and professional teaching thought process (Fecho, Graham, & Hudson-Ross, 2005).

Rethinking dialogue for antiracist teaching and learning. If teachers wish to effectively use dialogue as an outlet for racial literacy learning, they should plan on setting the stage for students to talk as openly as possible, inviting students to articulate their positions and ask questions, and encouraging students to give voice to their ideas daily (Bolgatz, 2005), not just during designated dialogue times of the day or week. Literacy research has long established dialogue as a tool through which learning occurs (Appleman, 2014; Au, 1980; Cardinal & Miller, 1981; Cazden, 1982; Grossman & Smagorinsky, 1999), particularly when students' personal experiences relate to the topic of classroom conversation. An implication leading from this finding shows that antiracist teaching offers a way of re-framing and re-thinking classroom dialogue as an opportunity for students to express tensions and questions around the nature of racism and other forms of oppression in relevant and appropriate ways. This type of dialogue involves the reduction of turn-taking rules to allow students to speak out without being called on and to even chime-in when others speak, as long as their interjection content is relevant to the topic (Cazden, 1982). Because many students are familiar with this conversational structure in their daily lives outside of school, gradually introducing it into the race and racism discussions in the classroom is a practical next step. With a teacher willing to relax their control of turn-taking and also willing to learn, over time, how to effectively facilitate learning through such dialogic structures. These dialogues, and the leanings it enables, can become normalized and promote racial literacy learning.

The significance of listening needed in dialogue emerged in Bolgatz's (2005) study of two high school teachers who raised issues of race and racism in their particular

subject area classrooms. Bolgatz (2005) concluded that facilitating such discussions is not a matter of ability or charisma, but instead, a sincere willingness to listen carefully. Similar to the teachers in Bolgatz's study, I would suggest for teachers to practice speaking comfortably and frequently about the social construction of race and the lived realities of racism, thus normalizing discussions about racism and other forms of oppression with students. Arguably, in Bolgatz' and my study, this type of modeling of racial discourse further encourages and fosters a safe environment for students to then enter into and maintain racial dialogue. The ordinariness of race and racism discussions can push students to talk, read, write, and listen more analytically, as students benefit intellectually through this type of rigorous enxchange. This type of comfort-building with race discussions may take time, self reflection, unlearning, and relearning.

Leading conversation, facilitating questions, sharing personal stories, and showing emotion in dialogue and discussions around race and racism was a central teaching and learning practice through which this curriculum was enacted by Mr. François, and through which both the teacher and students learned. These classroom dialogues included the teacher practicing vulnerable confidence, which meant Mr. François openly reflecting alongside his students regarding emotions surrounding personal experiences with race and racism and sharing his stances on racialized phenomenon by way of talking, singing, reading various multimodal texts together, and listening together. Teachers who serve as discussion leaders ought to be willing to experience and engage with their own and their students' emotions, as those play an important role in how dialogue can flourish when listening to and acknowledging the

stories and experiences of students (Thein, 2017; Thein & Schmidt, 2017). Classroom teachers ought to work towards developing vulnerable confidence through what Zembylas (2005) called "critical emotional knowledge" (p. 41) – a type of consciousness of ways that emotional processes can be expanded for "social resistance and empowerment" (p. 41). I would recommend classroom teachers plan on loosening their control of turn-taking structures, so that meaningful and relevant dialogue can become normalized and to prioritize their own critical emotional knowledge through this process.

Multimodality as a Tool for Racial Literacy Teaching and Learning

I have discussed the scholarly contribution of the finding of how multimodality enhanced the teaching and learning of racial literacy. Here, I return to this finding's implications for teachers' practice. In this study, multimodal composition allowed students to respond more meaningfully to the *Power Unit*, as the teacher presented forms of oppression, particularly racism and xenophobia in the U.S., through various literacy learning modes that were relevant to students. Multimodal composition (as well as multimodal teaching, including presentation of curricular content) supported student engagement with texts and topics, prompted discussion, and connected themes about race and racism across multiple genres, timeframes, and contexts in which students read (or listened) and composed. Examples of students' writing (evident in the content of writing portfolios and shared Google docs) reflected a wide variety of genres that focused on systemic abuses of power and oppressive injustices. Just as some schools and teachers have begun recognizing and integrating multimodal instruction into curriculum to support academic literacy development (Leander & Wells Rowe, 2006; Lillis, 2003; Mills, 2010),

I would encourage classroom teachers to begin or intensify the learning and practice of multimodal teaching explicitly for racial literacy growth. Teachers could use multimodality in presenting and discussing content, for example analyzing films, music, poetry, speaches, Hip Hop, and spoken word as text. Teachers may also design and implement learning activities that engage students in multimodal ways such as creating artwork, producing zines, composing song lyrics, or other mediums that center around antiracist themes and that spotlighted students' strengths and linguistic flexibilities.

Implications for Teacher Education

Leaders of colleges of education as well as teacher educators carry a responsibility to see that colleges of education courses and practicum experiences are places where pre-service teachers foster racial literacy development and democratic participation among their K-12 students (Ohito, 2016; Rogers & Mosley, 2008; Sealey-Ruiz & Greene, 2015). Colleges of education are arguably the safest and most productive locations of learning for pre-service teachers to have important discussions about race and racism and to learn curriculum and pedagogical practices for teaching racial literacy in K-12 classrooms. I encourage paradigm shifts in teacher education programs' stated and enacted values. Moving beyond mission statements, I recommend teacher education programs revise the learning goals for their graduates. I propose that colleges of education nationally and internationally, effectively design and offer theory and methods courses that promote pre-service teachers' identities, knowledge, and practices surrounding racial literacy and racial literacy instruction.

The work of Mr. François suggests that teacher educators should ensure themselves more professional space to examine their cultural identities, racial knowledge and core beliefs about race and racism in order to develop antiracist identities and expand their knowledge and skills surrounding racial literacy and racial literacy instruction. It seems unrealistic to expect teacher educators to foster identities in pre-service teachers and advocate for values they themselves do not hold or curriculum and teaching practices they do not know about. Once teacher educators begin doing their own identity and knowledge building work around race and racial literacy, they can then thoughtfully consider the overwhelming whiteness in teacher education programs across the nation. It seems critical that self-identifying White female pre-service teachers experience multiple opportunities to discuss and build their own understandings of race and racism (Glenn, 2009, Sealey-Ruiz & Greene, 2015; Skerrett, Pruitt, Warrington, 2016; Ohito, 2016). As Chris Emdin writes, "If you're not ready to talk about the fact that you are a white teacher in a black and brown school, then you shouldn't be ready to teach at that school" (Emdin, 2016, p. 60). I would encourage teacher education programs to design and integrate racial literacy frameworks in course work to promote race identity work and the development of racial literacy in their pre-service teachers.

To promote pre-service teachers' learning in this area, in cases where hierarchical approaches to teaching and learning exist, teacher educators can reflect around reasons to move away from approaches that neglect pre-service teachers' knowledge and expertise. Teacher educators may instead implement an approach that encourages collaborative talk and reflection around a racial literacy concept that pre-service teachers are

knowledgeable about and familiar with. Preservice teachers preparing to serve in culturally and linguistically complex communities could be given multiple opportunities to closely examine their stances on the ontology of literacy learning. Teacher educators might challenge their pre-service teachers to examine the pedagogical planning processes of literacy teachers who make paradigmatic shifts to teach racial literacy and choose to teach around racism at the intersection of other forms of oppression, such as classism, sexism, xenophobia, and homophobia. Engaging intersectionality theories in pre-service teachers' racial literacy discourses could provide them with the tools to interpret social constructions of race in a more global context, and then foster their students' racial fluency in diverse environments (Hall 1996; Leonardo 2009). Antiracist teaching requires a pedagogical dexterity of teachers, and if cultivated in their teacher preparation programs it has the potential to effectively prepare all types of teachers for significant racial literacy growth.

As another way to work towards the pedagogical goal of building pre-service teachers' racial literacies, teacher educators might consider planning to engage in relevant discussions around race and racism through multimodal texts. For example by viewing and discussing White supremacy as depicted in films such as Spike Lee's BlacKkKlansman (2018), pre-service teachers might sustain engagement as the finding from this research suggests. As other relevant options, teacher educators might view and discuss Jordan Peele's *Get Out* (2017) with their pre-service teachers, perhaps alongside selections of readings from rigorous antiracist texts such as Taylor Branch's *Parting the Waters* (1989) or *I've Got the Light of Freedom* (Payne, 2007). Such films and texts use

historical narrative and discomforting truths to offer provocative commentary with the potential to spark necessary discussions on systemic racism and the problem of unexamined White supremacist ideaologies. Teacher educators could use other modes that highlight historic racism and contemporary cases of White supremacy side by side. I would also encourage curriculum and instruction faculty and literacy professors creating, using, and revising syllabi for courses that explicitly focus on the teaching of antiracist curriculum theory or racial literacy theories, adapted for both undergraduate and graduate students. Reading curriculum and instruction faculty might wish to revisit goals teachers set for themselves, and look to fields like critical literacy to prioritize more dialogic and multimodal agenda.

Based on my analysis of the previously mentioned *outside yet within* finding, I would also advise teacher educators to first acknowledge and reflect around the unfortunate narrowing state of literacy learning in the face of obsessive standards enforcement (Fecho, Graham, & Hudson-Ross, 2005). For teacher educators, starting with this particular tension could provide a realistic and helpful point of departure in revising their vision and coursework, as far too many literacy teachers are "feeling caught between the glue and a sticky place" (Fecho, Graham, & Hudson-Ross, 2005, p. 197). Methods courses can include more antiracist readings that highlight both racial literacy theory and practice. Just like teacher educators, preservice teachers also require more practice in their teacher education methods coursework in decoding and reflecting on the state and national language learning standards in order to better integrate antiracist lessons and units they design to fit within the required curriculum. Pre-service teachers

can be taught to create reading and writing instruction with a timeline and materials within the scope and sequence of local school discrict and state standards. Antiracist teaching and learning will likely not flourish unless its foregrounds and prioritizes the necessisities of whichever official curriculum (as well as the accompanying benchmarks and assessments). For teacher educators, it seems crucial to begin pedagogical goal-setting in their coursework with this unavoidable tension.

Similar to how traditional teacher education programs invite pre-service teachers to create 'critical literacy units' or 'social-justice units' curriculum unit plans as cumulative projects, pre-service teachers could be supported in learning about how to design and implement 'antiracist units' within their assigned curriculum content. Teacher educators may guide pre-service teachers to create or appropriate antiracist units of study and invite pre-service teachers to adapt lessons that include counter narratives and historical experiences of historically marginalized communities. Lesson plans could include critiques of institutional racism and offer intersectionality as a theory to frame pedagogical content taught. If themes within intersectional theory are illuminated throughout an entire unit plan and informed by state standards, pre-service teachers then can scrutinize the official curriculum provided by districts and make more advanced cases as to why antiracist and racial literacy knowledge ought to be feasible in their classrooms "based on the language and construction of the standards" (King, 2016. p. 13).

Practicum experiences could involve placements with teachers who practice racial literacy instruction and thus would serve as mentors and facilitators to pre-service

teachers. These classroom spaces will provide opportunities for pre-service teachers to practice their racial literacy discourses and instructional practices prior to entering public school as full time teachers in culturally and linguistically complex classrooms and communities. To help develop agency among preservice teachers, curricular choice-making ought to be expected within the context of their cohort practicum experience so that risk-taking and confidence-building may mature.

Implications for Policy

For schools to effectively engage in racial literacy improvement at a larger scale, district leaders could be given more opportunities to learn about antiracist educational research so that it can become a prioritized and normalized portion of policy pieces realted to literacy learning. Such leaders may then advocate to legislators who determine district policies regarding high-stakes literacy standards to loosen their reigns and allow more space for teachers to design and implement innovative literacy curriculum and instruction that meets and exceeds standards. Policy-makers at national and state levels often feel beyond the reach of teachers, school leaders, and educational researchers. Yet it is possible for paradigm and policy shifts to occur with changes in leadership and greater responsiveness to societal conditions that necessitate that learning in school more explicitly educate students how to navigate an increasingly racially diverse and divided world. Such considerations at the highest levels of policy could lead to re-considering and revising the ways policy mandates tend to overly control teachers' capacities to design learning opportunities for students that are of great relevance to the world in which they live such as antiracist literacy curriculum and racial literacy instruction.

As for research institutions and non-school educational organizations that generate educational knowledge and practices that promote racial literacy learning, I suggest continued support and funding. Such sustainable organizations include the National Writing Project which foster teachers' practices that make possible examination of antiracist ideologies and development of racial literacy growth through writing curriculum integration across content areas.

FUTURE RESEARCH

While this study showed the ways that this teacher and I designed an approach to literacy curriculum and instruction that reflected an antiracist focus, further studies might explore additional approaches to classroom curriculum designs that aim to support students' racial literacy learning. Future literacy research interested in examining shifts in students' reading efficacy through an antiracist literacy curriculum might include a focus on relevant reading strategies in their inquiry and thus dedicate more time for students' reading choices – both in planning and during instruction. In further iterations of similar research, I foresee the reading instruction portion of curriculum implementation to include more comprehension lessons and modeling of reading strategies (both conventional and racial literacy reading strategies—meaning students bringing explicit racial literacy frameworks to their reading and interpretations of texts).

I intentionally limited the scope of this research project to Mr. François' classroom, with commitment to giving an in-depth descriptive analysis and findings detailing the "how and why" of such curriculum design and implementation as a phenomenon (Yin, 2014, p. 4). In order to do so, I focused on one teacher who was

tasked with multiple responsibilities, namely, teaching three content areas in one class. The sizeable nature of the teacher's seventh-grade Humanities content (and all the connected standards and assessments the teacher and his students were expected to master) allowed my work to provide insights for teachers in numerous subject areas pertaining to what a racial literacy focus in their curriculum and instruction could entail. Thus, while this study may have appeared limited by this highly contextual nature, it allowed for multifaceted insights into the planning and teaching processes related to racial literacy to various secondary curriculum areas. I argue that my findings provide a concrete enough understanding to encourage other literacy teachers and researchers to embark on such studies, and likely at a larger scale, when human resources allow.

I would attempt future case studies to sample a wider representation of teacher dispositions, which could shape a more rigorous depiction of a fuller array of teachers' experiences, understandings, and capabilities to design and implement an antiracist literacy curriculum. Due to my focus, I may have overlooked various potentially significant locations of racial literacy teaching and learning at Contender Middle School, but I considered it more essential to engross myself in the daily habits of one particular teacher's classroom, in order to more effectively prolong my engagement (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Future research with in-service teachers might account for the co-planning of a literacy curriculum with complex aims to include other grades and content areas. Even though I did not participate in teaching the *Power Unit* (with the exception of one model lesson on generating questions early on) I was, on the other hand, coaching and

mentoring Mr. François throughout the re-vision of the unit and also in reflection with him as he continued to implement it. Even though I most often noted that I mainly learned from the teacher and his students, Mr. François did see me as a knowledgeable veteran teacher there to support and challenge him as a pedagogical thought-partner, and future research can delve more deeply into the arrangements and effects of similar and different partnerships and roles when teachers and researchers come together to undertake curriculum design work.

CONCLUSIONS

The goal of this study was to better understand the processes of the co-design and implementation of an antiracist literacy curriculum and examine the processes around racial literacy teaching and learning in a culturally and linguistically complex classroom. Throughout this yearlong case study, I supported a novice teacher as he envisioned, mapped out, and taught the *Power Unit* within the confines of the official curriculum.

The study rested largely under the assumption that policy makers, literacy researchers, colleges of education, and literacy teachers are committed to educational equity or that stakeholders find racial literacy an important form of educational research to explore. In an attempt to clarify the aims of a research agenda striving for racial equity, the Literacy Research Association edited their mission statement to claim:

> The role of literacy research in perpetuating or interrupting deficit-oriented narratives about the literacy practices of people of color is powerfully influenced by the racially-oriented challenges faced by scholars of color both in their home

> academic institutions and within professional organizations, including LRA. In order to build our capacity to address racial inequality in schooling and literacy research, LRA leadership and members have begun to confront our own racialized histories and colonizing practices that permeate LRA and that determine who is included and excluded within the research community. LRA acknowledges that racialization (and not only race), and linguicism (and not only language), are pervasive in the 21st century (November 29, 2016, https://lira.memberclicks.net/assets/docs/the%20role%20of%20literacy%20research%20in%20racism%20and%20racial%20violencejanuary2017final.pdf).

To guide this work forward, future research agendas might push for more updated and self-reflective practices around racial literacy that teachers and researchers can co-revise and further explore. In the process, future literacy research can recognize and disrupt racism and other forms of oppression as widespread tensions in literacy curriculum and in classrooms.

APPENDIX

Appendix A: Research Matrix

Research Question	Data Sources	Examples of data to answer this question	Analysis Required
Overarching question:			
Question 1: How does the teacher conceptualize his students' racial and linguistic knowledge, experiences, and repertoires as tools or as resources for teaching and learning reading and writing?	Field-notes & Classroom Observations	Field notes on whole, group interactions around text	- Inductively coded (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) - First-cycle and second-cycle coding (Miles & Huberman, 1994)
	Audio & Video Data	Transcribed segments of audio data	- Inductively coded - First-cycle and second-cycle coding
	Teacher Interviews	Transcript of teacher interview	- Inductively coded - First-cycle and second-cycle coding
	Student Interviews	Transcripts of student interviews	- Inductively coded - First-cycle and second-cycle coding
Question 2: How does the teacher draw upon his own racial literacy and teacher agency in conceptualizing reading and writing for his students?	Field-notes & Classroom Observations	Field-notes about small group interactions around text that involve the students and the teacher (including discussion around language ideology and side-conversations between students)	- Inductively coded - First-cycle and second-cycle coding
	Audio & Video Data	Transcribed sections of audio data	- Transcripts coded for participation - Inductively coded
	Teacher Interviews	Transcript of teacher interview	- Inductively coded - First-cycle and second-cycle coding

	Student Interviews	Transcripts of student interviews	- Inductively coded - First-cycle and second-cycle coding
Question 3: How, if at all, does this teacher's racial literacy knowledge, practice, and agency develop or change through the process of designing and implementing an antiracist literacy curriculum?	Field-notes & Classroom Observations	Field notes on small group interactions in which focal students are present	- Inductively coded - First-cycle coding and second-cycle
	Audio & Video Recordings	Transcribed segments of audio/video data	- Inductively coded - First-cycle and second-cycle coding
	Student interviews	Transcripts of student interviews	- Inductively coded - First-cycle and second-cycle coding
Question 4: How do the students respond to and engage with this antiracist literacy curriculum?	Field-notes & Classroom Observations	Field-notes on small group interactions in which focal students are present	- Inductively coded - First-cycle and second-cycle coding
	Audio & Video Recordings	Transcribed segments of audio/video data	- Inductively coded - First-cycle and second-cycle coding
	Student interviews	Transcripts of student interviews	- Inductively coded - First-cycle and second-cycle coding

Appendix B: Teacher Interview Protocol

1. As you know, I'm curious about racial literacy and anti-racist curriculum. Can you tell me about how you identify your racial literacy and how it is evolving? Can you tell me about how you view or envision anti-racist curriculum and instruction?

2. How, if at all, do you think reading and writing workshop influences your instruction around racial literacy in reading and writing?

3. Tell me how you chose to teach *Selma* as well as other texts to your students.

4. In the context of both your campus and your classroom, how do you resist and reclaim language choice and use, as well as language variation for your students? How do you do that for yourself?

5. Tell me how you chose to build on your students' language repertoires.

6. Can you tell me a little bit about style of discussion participation in your classroom?

    a. Do you notice some students who seem to participate more than others?
    b. What are students bringing?

7. Tell me about how you've grouped students for discussions around whole class texts?

8. Tell me about reading workshop conference time.

9. Tell me about writing workshop conference time.

10. Tell me about (name focal student) as a racially literate and linguistically complex youth.

11. Is there anything else about this process you'd like to share with me?

Appendix C: Student Interview Protocol

1. Tell me about yourself as a literate person or tell me about your literature life – both outside of school and in school.

2. Tell me about how you self-identify racially.

3. Tell me about how you self-identify culturally and linguistically.

4. Tell me about what it's like when Mr. B discusses a certain text with the whole class.

5. Tell me about reading conferences with Mr. B.

6. Tell me about writing conferences with Mr. B.

7. Tell me about reading/writing conferences with a student-partner.

8. Tell me about choosing your own language to respond to texts.

9. Tell me about choosing your own book during the workshop part of Mr. B's units.

10. Is there anything else you want to tell me about … or about yourself as a writer or as a reader?

Appendix D: General Student Questionnaire

1. What is your full name?
2. Age:
3. Gender or preferred orientation:
4. How do you self-identify racially?
5. How do you self-identify ethnically?
6. What cultural identities do you embrace?
7. How would you describe the economic status of your family?
8. How frequently do you speak a language other than English at home, or in your neighborhood, or in your community spaces?
9. What other language/s do you read and write in?
10. If you were not born in the U.S., when did you come to the U.S.?
11. About how old were you when you started speaking English?
12. What is the language you feel most comfortable speaking?

Appendix E: Student Reading and Writing Inventories

Note: These questions were asked at the beginning and end of the study.

READING

1. How many books have you read in the last 12 months?
2. How did you learn to read?
3. Why do people read?
4. What does someone have to do in order to be a good reader?
5. What kinds, types, genres of books do you like to read?
6. How do you decide what books you read?
7. Have you ever re-read a book? If so, can you name it?

WRITING

1. Are you a writer?
2. How did you learn to write?
3. How do people learn to write?
4. Why do people write?
5. What do you think a good writer needs to do in order to write well?
6. In general, how do you feel about what you write?

Appendix F: End of the Year Student Questionnaires

Identity Q1. Have you changed since the start of the year? How so? If you didn't change, how do you see yourself growing?

Identity Q2. How did you improve the most? Writing, reading, speaking, listening? How can you tell you got better?

Identity Q3. What are you most proud of? (real world)

Identity Q4. What other language and literacy skills/processes changed?

Writing Q1. What was your most outstanding writing experience, or writing habit, or piece of writing?

Writing Q2. If you worked on expository writing, what did you learn?

Writing Q3. How did you change as a writer?

Writing Q4. How do you predict your writing might move forward?

Reading Q1.What were some of the most outstanding texts you read this year?

Reading Q2. What did you learn about yourself as a reader?

Reading Q3. As you look ahead, what will you read more of?

Speaking & Listening Q1. Did you improve in your speaking and / or listening in any way(s)?

Speaking & Listening Q2.Why is that important, or why does that matter?

Speaking & Listening Q3.Are you better at speaking or listening outside of class? If so, how can you tell you've gotten better?

Power Unit Q1. Define power. Who has power and why?

Power Unit Q2. How do different types of power change history?

Power Unit Q3. What kind of power was and is most important in the texts, stories, films, poems you read this year?

Power Unit Q4. Does powerful writing change history? If so, how?

Power Unit Q5. Explain what this means to you: "Until the lion has a historian, the hunter will always be the hero."

Writing Portfolios Q1. Which piece(s) of your writing are you most proud of?

Writing Portfolios Q2. Do you see any changes in your writing since the beginning of the year? If so, what?

Writing Portfolios Q3.What did you learn about writing (expository essays or other types)?

Appendix G

2015-2016 Year At A Glance – English Language Arts and Reading — Grade 7

Manor ISD Academics Above Everything

Unit name underlined

Readiness Standards are listed in bold.

Supporting Standards are listed in italics.

Ongoing /Process Standards are listed at the bottom in red

*The TEKS have been truncated in order to facilitate the at-a-glance view. Refer to the IFD for the full language of the TEKS.

1st 6 Weeks	2nd 6 Weeks	3rd 6 Weeks	4th 6 Weeks	5th 6 Weeks	6th 6 Weeks
Unit 1: Literary Nonfiction and Poetry *7.3C-Place and time influence of theme.* *7.4A- Graphical elements of a poem.* *7.7A- Autobiography and a fictional adaptation of it.* **7.8A- Figurative language.** *7.13A- Messages in media.* *7.13B- Visual and sound influence on message.* *7.13C- Media influence.* Writing: Personal Narrative **7.14 (A, B-D)- Develop a first draft.** *7.15B.i- Poetic techniques.* *7.15B.ii- Figurative language.* *7.15B.iii- Graphic elements.* **7.16A- Write a personal narrative.** *7.17C- Literary multi-paragraph essay.* *7.19A.i- Verbs* *7.19A.iv- Conjunctive adverbs.* *7.19A.vii- Subordinating conjunctions.* *7.19A.viii- Transitions* *7.20A- Capitalization* *7.20B.i- Commas* *7.21A- Use resources to correct spelling.* *7.28A- Discussion participation.*	Unit 2: Fiction and Drama *7.3A- Describe themes.* *7.3B- Myths and epic tales.* *7.3C- Theme.* *7.5A- Dialogue and stage directions.* **7.6A- Influence of setting on plot.** **7.6B- Plot development through character response.** *7.6C- Analyze different forms of point of view.* **7.8A- Figurative language.** *7.13A- Messages in media.* *7.13B- Visual and sound influence on message.* *7.13C- Media influence.* Writing: Personal Narrative **7.14 (A, B-D, E)- Develop a first draft.** *7.15A(i-v)- Strategies to enhance style.* **7.16A- Write a personal narrative.** *7.17C- Literary multi-paragraph essay.* *7.19A.ii- Appositive phrases.* *7.19A.v-Prepositions* *7.19A.vi-Relative pronouns.* *7.19A.vii- Subordinating conjunctions.* *7.19A.viii- Transitions* *7.19B- Complex sentences.* *7.20A- Capitalization* *7.20B.i- Commas* *7.21A- Use resources to correct spelling.* *7.27A- Critique literary work.* *7.28A- - Discussion participation.*	Unit 3: Informational Text *7.2C- Complete analogies.* *7.2D- Common foreign words/phrases.* *7.9A- Theme and author's purpose.* **7.10A- Main idea.** *7.10B- Factual claims, assertions, and opinions.* **7.10C- Organizational patterns.** **7.10D- Synthesize across texts.** *7.12A- Multi-dimensional instructions.* *7.12B- Graphical components of text.* *7.13A- Messages in media.* *7.13B- Visual and sound influence on message.* *7.13C- Media influence.* Writing: Expository **7.14 (A, B-D, E)- Develop a first draft.** **7.17A(i-v)- Multi-paragraph essay.** *7.17B- Opinion letter.* *7.17C- Respond to text.* *7.19A.ii- Appositive phrases.* *7.19A.iii- Adverbial phrases.* *7.19A.v-Prepositions* *7.19A.vii- Subordinating conjunctions.* *7.19B- Complex sentences.* *7.19C- Sentence variety.* *7.20B.ii- Semicolons, colons, and hyphens.* *7.21A- Use resources to correct spelling.* *7.26(A-C)- Listening*	Unit 4: Persuasive Text and Media *7.2C- Complete analogies.* *7.2D- Common foreign words/phrases.* *7.10B- Factual claims, assertions, and opinions.* *7.11A- Central argument.* *7.11B- Rhetorical fallacies.* *7.13A- Messages in media.* *7.13B- Visual and sound influence on message.* *7.13C- Media influence.* *7.13D- Formality and tone.* Writing: Expository **7.14 (A, B-D, E)- Develop a first draft.** **7.17A(i-v)- Multi-paragraph essay.** *7.18A- Established thesis.* *7.18B- Considers counter-arguments.* *7.18C- Organized evidence.* *7.19A.iii- Adverbial phrases.* *7.19A.v-Prepositions* *7.19B- Complex sentences.* *7.19C- Sentence variety.* *7.20B.ii- Semicolons, colons, and hyphens.*	Unit 5: Generating Connections ALL GENRES *7.2C- Complete analogies.* *7.2D- Common foreign words/phrases.* *7.3A- Describe themes.* *7.3B- Myths and epic tales.* *7.3C- Theme.* *7.4A- Graphical elements of a poem.* *7.5A- Dialogue and stage directions.* **7.6A- Influence of setting on plot.** **7.6B- Plot development through character response.** *7.6C- Analyze different forms of point of view.* *7.7A- Autobiography and a fictional adaptation of it.* **7.8A- Figurative language.** *7.9A- Theme and author's purpose.* **7.10A- Main idea.** *7.10B- Factual claims, assertions, and opinions.* **7.10C- Organizational patterns.** **7.10D- Synthesize across texts.** *7.11A- Central argument.* *7.11B- Rhetorical fallacies.* Writing: Review ALL GENRES *7.14A- Plan a first draft.* **7.14B- Choose organizational strategy.** **7.14 C- Revise drafts.** **7.16A- Write a personal narrative.** **7.17A(i-v)- Multi-paragraph essay.** *7.19A.iii- Adverbial phrases.* *7.19A.v-Prepositions* *7.19B- Complex sentences.* *7.19C- Sentence variety.* *7.20B.ii- Semicolons, colons, and hyphens.*	Unit 6: Research *7.17D- Multimedia presentation.* *7.22A- Brainstorm to decide a topic, and formulate open-ended questions.* *7.22B- Generate research plan.* *7.23A- Collect data.* *7.23B- Categorize information.* *7.23C- Record bibliographic information.* *7.23D- Paraphrasing and plagiarizing.* *7.24A- Narrow/ broaden research question as necessary.* *7.24B- Evaluate the relevance and reliability of sources.* *7.25A- Compiles information from multiple sources.* *7.25B- Develops a topic sentence, summarize findings, and use evidence to support conclusions.* *7.25C- Presents findings in a consistent format.* *7.25D- Follows accepted formats.*

Ongoing TEKS

7.2A- Determine the meaning of grade-level academic English words derived from Latin, Greek, or other linguistic roots and affixes.

7.2B- Use context to determine or clarify the meaning of unfamiliar or multiple meaning words.

7.2E- Use a dictionary, a glossary, or a thesaurus to determine the meanings, syllabication, pronunciations, alternate word choices, and parts of speech of words.

fig.19(A-F)- Reading/Comprehension Skills.

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